

THE
TWO FARMERS,

AN
EXEMPLARY TALE:

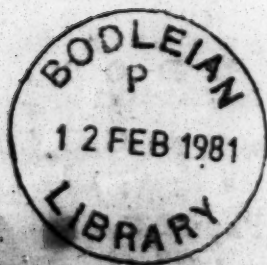
DESIGNED TO RECOMMEND
THE PRACTICE OF BENEVOLENCE
TOWARDS
MANKIND, AND ALL OTHER LIVING CREATURES;
AND THE
RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE OF THE SABBATH DAY.

THE THIRD EDITION CORRECTED.

By MRS. TRIMMER.

L O N D O N :

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TO MRS. DENWARD.

MADAM,

IN consequence of a hint, with which I was favoured by the Monthly Reviewers, I had resolved to write a short tract for the poor, that might answer the purpose of my *Fabulous Histories*; but remained undetermined in respect to the mode of executing this design, till you suggested to me the idea of enlarging the history of *The Two Farmers*, introduced in that work; and afterwards directed me to *Dr. Primatt's Dissertation on the Duty of Mercy, and Sin of Cruelty to Brute Animals*, which I had never before seen.

In composing this simple tale, I have endeavoured to comply with the wishes of all my kind advisers; and am pleased with the opportunity of communicating to the lower orders of people many of the good doctor's sentiments; which, though intermixed with inferior materials, and put into an humble dress, may prove an acceptable acquisition to those who are not able to purchase his *Dissertation*;

DEDICATION.

but I cannot conscientiously appropriate their thanks to myself: pardon me, therefore, Madam, for the liberty I take, in pointing out the person to whom they are originally indebted for the most valuable part of the present performance—Happy shall I be if it meets with your approbation; and is found to answer your benevolent intention in proposing it.

I beg your acceptance of my best acknowledgments of the honour conferred on myself, and that you will believe me to be, with sincere esteem,

MADAM,

Your obliged and obedient servant,

SARAH TRIMMER.

BRENTFORD,
OCTOBER 19, 1786.

ADVERTISEMENT.

AN ardent desire of being useful to a very important part of the rising generation, has induced the author of the *Servant's Friend* to exhibit the virtues of Mr. and Mrs. Simpkins in another point of view, in hopes that their history will prove an agreeable vehicle for conveying to Sunday scholars, under the idea of amusement for their leisure hours, some lessons, which, if imprinted on their minds, may be beneficial to them in the future part of their lives; when a prudent frugality in a state of service, or the gratuitous reward of their diligence and fidelity, shall have enabled them to marry and settle in the world.

It may be said, that it is to no purpose to turn the thoughts of the lower ranks of people towards the farming business, when *small* farms are scarcely to be met with. The truth of this observation is acknowledged and lamented: but let it be remembered, that those for whom this little work is chiefly designed are not yet in *want* of such a kind of settlement; and who can tell what the good providence of GOD may bring about for his servants in the course of a few years?

If, as there is cause to believe, a want of principle in the poor has averted the blessing of Heaven, and obstructed the charity of their superiors, contrary effects may be expected from their reformation; and it can hardly be doubted, that if they improve aright the

ADVERTISEMENT.

advantage of *religious instruction*, which is now bestowed upon them, a variety of means will be contrived for perpetuating and increasing their comforts in every stage of life. The readers of the following pages are therefore earnestly entreated to peruse them with attention; and to observe the *moral* and *religious instructions* they contain, more than the *incidents of the story*. A great part of these instructions are extracted from the valuable work of a learned and pious author: the rest are the dictates of a heart warmly interested in the happiness of the poor. Nor are the lessons here presented confined to the practice of the *Farmer* and *husbandman*; they are applicable, in some degree, to every station of life; for **THE RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE OF THE SABBATH-DAY, and THE EXERCISE OF BENEVOLENCE TOWARDS MAN AND BEAST,** are *general duties*; and whoever performs them in the greatest extent will be the highest in the esteem of his fellow-creatures; and, in what is infinitely more valuable, the favour of God.

THE TWO FARMERS.

CHAP. I.

IN order to gratify those readers who were pleased with the former part of the history of Thomas Simpkins, I shall now give an account of his behaviour after he became a farmer.

By means of the money which had been left him by his good master, Mr. Brown, and the sum advanced by squire Harvey, he found himself in possession of a convenient house, surrounded with fields of rich arable land; together with sufficient pasture for the live-stock he had purchased, which consisted of four horses, two cows, a score of sheep, six hogs, a jack ass, and a variety of poultry. It has already been mentioned that Thomas (whom, for the future, we shall call farmer Simpkins) married the worthy young woman who had been his fellow-servant: he also took his good mother to live with him, that he might succour and comfort her when she should, through age and infirmity, be incapable of getting her own livelihood.

Instead of being subject to the commands of others, Mr. Simpkins now found it necessary to hire two men and two boys, as servants for himself, (who lived in the house, and had constant employment.)

employment :) he had besides several occasional labourers. One of his men was named Richard Bruce, the other Roger Hicks. Richard Bruce was an experienced trusty servant, who seemed to have been allotted to Mr. Simpkins as a reward for his fidelity to his own master ; for, like himself, he acted upon the principle of doing as he would be done by ; and the farmer would have been often at a sad loss without such an adviser ; though he had got some knowledge of business by working at husbandry, when out of place, and reading books on the subject at Mr. Brown's. Richard Bruce was induced to hire himself to Mr. Simpkins from having heard a great deal in his praise ; for though he was a new inhabitant, his character was known in the village. Indeed, it generally happens so, that a man's good or ill name flies before him, or at least treads upon his heels ; therefore it is a very foolish notion which some people take up, that they may behave ill in one place, and yet be respected in another.

Roger Hicks was a sober, inoffensive fellow, who had a great deal of strength, and was willing to turn his hand to any thing. Tom Lang, the eldest of the boys, was a good-natured lively lad, a little inclined to mischievous sports. His companion, Joe Martin, was rather ill humoured and lazy ; for he had been badly brought up by his parents, and afterwards lived with a neighbouring farmer, (whom we shall have farther occasion to mention) who took no care of his domestics.

According to his usual custom, the good farmer, when he entered on his new station of life, searched the scriptures for directions how to act as a farmer and master of a family ; and collected from thence the following texts, which, with the fourth commandment at the head of them, he transcribed into

into a little memorandum book, intending to carry it always about him, that he might read it occasionally as he walked in the fields, to remind him of his duty.

Thou shalt not defraud the labourer of his hire.

Thou shalt not sleep with the wages of an hireling.

Remember that thou wast thyself a servant.

Provide for thine household.

Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a small.

Thou shalt not have in thine house divers measures, a great and a small.

But thou shalt have a perfect and just weight; a perfect and just measure shalt thou have; that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

That which goeth out of thy mouth thou shalt keep and perform.

Recompense no man evil for evil.

As much as in you lieth, live peaceably with all men.

Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer.

Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart.

Thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor shut thy hand from thy poor brother.

Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth; and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth.

If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses.

Do good to them that hate you.

Love one another.

Honour all men; love the brotherhood; fear God; honour the king.

Be not desirous of vain glory.

If sinners entice thee, consent thou not.

Strong drink is a mocker.

Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.

A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast.

Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn.

Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together.

Thou shalt not see thy brother's ox or his sheep go astray, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt, in any case, bring them again unto thy brother:

And if thy brother be not nigh unto thee, or if thou know him not, then thou shalt bring it into thine own house, and it shall be with thee until thy brother seek after it, and thou shalt restore it to him again.

In like manner shalt thou do with all lost things that are thy brother's.

If thou seeest thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again.

If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him.

When ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of the field; neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thine harvest: thou shalt leave them for the poor and the stranger.

In all thy gifts shew a cheerful countenance, and dedicate thy tithes with gladness.

The hand of the diligent maketh rich.

Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds.

Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, make your requests known unto God.

Take no [anxious] thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, or wherewithal ye shall be clothed; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things: but seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.

They that seek the Lord shall want no manner of thing that is good.

Mr.

Mr. Simpkins's servants came to their places on Saturday evening: it was his particular fancy they should do so, that he might take them to church, and return thanks to God for *making him an household*, before he set them to work. On the Sunday evening, after reading the foregoing portions of scripture, and some others which pointed out the duties of masters and servants, and several of David's psalms, he, his wife, and mother, joined together in singing the following hymn.

The Husbandman's Prayer.*

*Thou GREAT CREATOR of this earth,
Who gave to ev'ry seed its birth;
By whom our fields with show'rs are blest,
Regard the husbandman's request.*

*I'm going now to till my ground,
And scatter there my seed around;
Which I no more expect to see,
Unless thy blessing sow with me.*

*In vain our seed around we throw;
In vain we harrow where we sow;
Except thou dost our labours bless,
And give the grain a due increase:*

*Not one, of all my barn supplies,
Will ever from the ridges rise,
Unless thy blessing does pervade
The buried corn, and shoot the blade.*

*Let then thy blessing, LORD, attend
On all the labours of my hand;
That I with joy may reap and mow
A rich return for what I sow.*

* From the Husbandman's Manual.

Open the window of the sky,
 And show'r down plenty from on high;
 With fat of earth the seed sustain,
 And raise a spear from every grain.

Let not our sins thy vengeance move
 To turn our heaven to brass.* above;
 Or harden into iron our earth,
 And o'er our fields to spread a dearth.

But pour in season, on the grain,
 The former and the latter rain;
 And in proportion due supply
 The needful change of wet and dry.

Forbid the vermin to devour;
 Forbid the mildew's blasting show'r;
 Forbid the tempest to destroy
 My growing crops and promis'd joy.

Crown with thy goodies, LORD, the year;
 And let thy blessings round appear;
 Let vales be cloth'd with grass and corn,
 And hills let various flocks adorn.

Give to the sons of men their bread;
 Let beasts with fatt'ning grass be fed;
 All things in plenty, LORD, provide,
 That all our wants may be supplied.

Give us a plenty, LORD, we pray,
 From fields of corn, from meads of hay;
 Of fruits from orchards grafted sticks;
 Of milk from all the milky flocks.

Thou, LORD, vouchsafe to bless our land,
 And ev'ry work we take in hand;
 That so, with list'd hands, we may
 Return thee praises night and day.

* Alluding to Leviticus xxvi. 27.

After this hymn was ended, Mr. Simpkins desired his family to kneel down while he read prayers: and before he retired to rest he told them that he should make this a constant practice every evening, and would gladly begin each day in the same manner; but that could not be managed, excepting on Sundays, because business required very early attendance in the fields; but he recommended to each of his servants to pray in private.

C H A P. II.

It was necessary, in Mr. Simpkins's situation, that when the business of the day was over, his servants should be companions to him, his wife, and mother; and therefore, excepting on Sundays, they lived in the kitchen, because two fires would have been expensive; and it would have looked affected in them, who had lately been in a low station, to have lived always in the parlour. They wished to keep up a proper distance between themselves and their domestics; but, at the same time, to lay no farther restraint on the men and boys than was requisite for this purpose, as they had a reasonable claim to cheerfulness and merriment when the labour of the day was over.

Mr. Simpkins entered on his farm at Michaelmas; and by the time he was settled, the evenings began to be long; he therefore brought forth his books, in order to teach the boys to read. Tom Lang had been taught a little; but Joe Martin did not know his letters, nor was he much inclined to learn. When they had done reading, the farmer, or Rich-
and

ard Bruce, usually asked them questions concerning husbandry work; such as, which was the best method of reaping corn? tying up the sheaves? building up the shocks? making ricks? &c. which had a tendency to improve them in their calling. After this, one or other told a diverting story, or sung a song. Mrs. Simpkins had a very good voice; and though she did not approve Susan Clarke's collection of ballads, she knew a few that no young woman need be ashamed to sing before any body; but, when a servant, she contented herself with these few, because learning a variety she thought would be apt to put business out of her head. Old Mrs. Simpkins often contributed to their amusement, by singing the ditties which used to beguile the time while she sat at her spinning-wheel, and sweetened her harder labours. Her most favourite ones were, the Berkshire Lady, Fair Rosamond, The Lamentations of Jane Shore, and Chevy Chase. No song was ever sung by the fire-side that had the least immorality in it, or that ridiculed any thing that was religious: neither did any one relate nonsensical stories about ghosts and apparitions, because Mr. and Mrs. Simpkins had learnt, at Mr. Brown's, that it was foolish to believe in them; besides, such stories can answer no purpose but to make timorous people more fearful.

On Sunday evenings Mr. Simpkins selected some portion of scripture suited to the instruction which his family at that time stood in particular need of, which he explained to them according to the knowledge he had acquired at Mr. Brown's, or from books, which he had carefully read. As his remarks may be useful to others in the same rank of life, I will repeat some of them for the edification of my readers. I shall begin with his observations on the first chapter of Genesis, which he read with a view
of

of exciting sentiments of tenderness and justice towards his cattle.

Mr. Simpkins desired his men and boys to take notice, that this chapter told them, GOD created *all other living creatures*, as well as man, and gave them life, and blessed them. That man, as well as the lower creatures, was made *out of the dust of the earth*; "So that, in respect to our *bodies*," said he, "we are no better than the meanest worm that crawleth upon the ground; and it is only by divine appointment that man has dominion over the rest of the creation; for, as our *Maker*, God could, if it had been his good pleasure, have given dominion to the *horse* or the *ox*, or any other creature, and have left *man* like the *baboon*, to herd with *brutes*. Therefore," added the farmer, "we should not be tyrannical, as we too often are, over poor dumb beasts, who are placed in their different ranks by GOD ALMIGHTY's will, and not their own choice.

"To be sure," continued he, "*man* has the preference to a *brute* in respect to *reason*; but this, as well as *dominion*, is the *gift of GOD*, who can take it away, and yet let the human form remain the same, as is the case with natural fools: and when we *have* reason, and do not act according to it, we become brutes; nay, worse than brutes, in human shape. And though GOD ALMIGHTY, in his infinite wisdom, gives men hopes of *immortal life after death*, this is his free gift also; for it is not *natural* for men to rise from the dead; and we can no more raise *ourselves* than the brutes can; nay, if we lead wicked lives we shall bring ourselves into a worse condition than that of the meanest reptile. Therefore, my lads," said the farmer, "do not set yourselves up above dumb creatures, as if *men* alone were the workmanship of GOD; but pray use them kindly. Consider, they have *flesh and blood and*

bones,

Bones, made out of *the dust of the earth*, as well as *we*; and there is no doubt but they can feel pain. For my own part," continued the good farmer, "I mean no offence to any of you; but I look upon my horses, my oxen and sheep, nay, on the dogs and cats, as my *servants*; and, as such, shall give them their due, and protect them if I see them ill treated. Poor dumb creatures! they cannot complain to their master, as you men and boys can do; and therefore may suffer a deal of misery out of my sight, that I can never here of; but, depend upon it, I shall be very angry if I know of any barbarities practised on them; so take care what you do, my boys.

"I desire," added he, "that you will not fail to feed the horses properly, and give them* water. Consider how hard poor beasts work, and that they must want refreshment. You, who don't toil half so much as they do, would think it a very sad thing if I was to deny you bread and cheese and beer, and send you fasting to bed; or were I to give you *victuals* without *drink*, or *drink* without *victuals*, it would be very uncomfortable to you: and so it must certainly be to the poor beasts; for it is very plain that they feel both *hunger* and *thirst*.

"I beg," said he, "that you will always take the harness off the horses as soon as they have done work; rub them down, and give them some good litter. you know how refreshing it is to yourselves to be clean; and 'tis my belief that horses mind cleanliness more than many men and boys do: but I suppose you had all rather lie in a bed than on the hard ground; and so had the horses, there is no doubt. Think of your own feelings then, my good boys, and pity theirs. I shall take care to provide oats and hay for the horses and other cattle; for what else can I give them for their services?

They

They want neither our *money* nor our *clothes*; they all, as one may say, wear GOD ALMIGHTY's *livery*, who provides them with more durable garments than the best art of man can furnish them with: and if beasts were as proud as we, they might reproach us with wearing their second-hand clothes. And all the grass of the field is, strictly speaking, *their property*; though we farmers are apt to talk of *our hay* and *our grass*; for hath not GOD said, in the chapter I have been reading, "*To every beast of the field I have given every green herb for meat?*" The grass and other herbs, therefore, whether green or made into hay, are no gifts of ours; the beasts have a just right to them; they were given to them before *man* was created; and therefore to withhold it from them, without paying them, is a robbery and a sin. If, instead of digging up a field with a spade, we, to save the sweat of our own brows, make use of the labour and strength of beasts to plow it for us, we ought, in justice and gratitude, to give them something in lieu of what we have taken away. If the corn I sow is *my corn*, not *their corn*, the grass I plow up is *their grass*, not *my grass*; for when GOD appointed man to be tenant of the field, he gave him no right to deprive his beast of that food which GOD ordained for him: but, as lord of the manor, GOD ALMIGHTY demands a quit-rent of him for the use of the beasts that labour for him: therefore I think myself in duty bound," continued Mr. Simpkins, "to supply the wants of my cattle some way or other; If I do not, I shall be as bad as a thief or a robber; nay, in one respect, worse than those who rob their own kind; because a man may try another by law for robbing him, and get justice done; but poor dumb creatures can make no complaints, there are no lawyers to plead for them! But the eternal Judge will avenge their cause,

cause, if they are ill-treated, or he would not have said so much about them in the holy scriptures."

Richard Bruce entirely agreed with his master; for though he was not so good a scholar as Mr. Simpkins, he could read his Bible, and had a deal of humanity in his disposition. He said that, for his part, he never used dumb things ill; indeed he was afraid to do so, for he considered them all as God Almighty's creatures, which, after he had made, he pronounced to be good. "Don't we read in the Psalms," added he, "*The mighty GOD, even the LORD hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof; every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills.*"

"Very true, Richard," replied Mr. Simpkins: "and don't you remember that Solomon, in the book of Wisdom, says, *O LORD, thou lovest all things that are, and abhorrest nothing that thou hast made: for never wouldst thou have made any thing if thou hadst hated it. And how could any thing have endured if it had not been thy will; or have been preserved, if not called by thee?*"

"To be sure," said Mrs. Simpkins, "no creature that God hath made can be unknown to him; and we can scarcely think he will despise his own works."

"All this is very good," said old Mrs. Simpkins: "and I should like to hear more of it, if I could keep awake; but, my dear Thomas, when you get books before you, you forget how time flies. Roger has been yawning this half hour; Joe Martin looks stupified; Tom Lang rubs his eyes; and I do believe my daughter Kitty is sleepy too: so let us go to rest." "With all my heart," said the farmer; "so put the Bible on the shelf, my dear, and let us say our prayers;" which they accordingly did, and implored the God of all mercies to give them merciful hearts.

C H A P. III.

It happened one Saturday that Tom Lang, whose business it was to milk the cows, had leave from his master to go and see his mother, who was ill; and Joe Martin was ordered to milk for him. As he had a quarrel with Tom the night before, Joe murmured at being obliged to do his work: however, he dared not refuse; so away he went in very ill humour, and thus he continued all day. It happened that, in the evening, Mr. Simpkins went accidentally past the cow-house, just at the time of milking; when he saw the door shut, and heard a strange lowing within: he hastened forwards; and, suddenly entering the cow-house, found the wicked urchin, Joe Martin, beating poor Colley, a quiet, harmless cow, with a knotted stick, as hard as he could strike. Shocked and provoked at once, the farmer seized the cruel boy, and, snatching the stick from him, was going to beat him with it; but recollecting that he might lame him for ever, he contented himself with giving him some smart cuts with a hazle switch he had in his hand.

When Mr. Simpkins returned home, his wife and mother perceived that something had disturbed him, and begged to know the cause of his uneasiness, which he related; and young Mrs. Simpkins, who was very tender-hearted, could not help dropping a few tears when she heard how poor Colley, her favourite cow, had been used.

"Lack-a-day, mistress!" cried Roger Hicks, "what dost whimper for? I have seen him do worse than that at Farmer Mills's: he never drove an ox to market there but he goaded him along with a sharp nail at the end of a stick, or cut him across the hocks. To my certain knowledge he drove an
ox

ox till it went mad, and did a mortal deal of mischief at fair."

"And why did you not tell me of this when you heard me order him a milking?" said Farmer Simpkins, who could not help being angry. "I know not, master," answered Roger, "I was ashamed, and afraid; and besides, says I to myself, I must not tell tales; and I thought he could not do so here, because *you* care for your beasts, and Farmer Mills does not; if he did, it might be the better for him, mayhap: but that's not my business; you *care* for your beasts, master, and Richard Bruce looks well after the boys; so no great damage can be done to the poor dumb creatures."—"Turn Joe away directly!" exclaimed young Mrs. Simpkins. "Don't let him stay a day longer!" cried the mother. "He deserves to be so punished, to be sure," said Mr. Simpkins, (whose anger began to cool;) "but such a measure would only secure my own cattle from being ill treated; and he may be trusted, and use other people's badly a long while before he is found out. So I think the best way will be to keep him, and try to teach him better; perhaps, by being always with people who have tender hearts, he may learn good habits. Besides, my dear Kitty, it is not following the example of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to cast off the wicked without trying to mend them: and remember that Joe is fatherless and motherless."

These considerations were quite sufficient to reconcile Mrs. Simpkins to her husband's making farther trial of Joe Martin: and old Mrs. Simpkins remarked that, to be sure, turning the boy away in that hasty manner would not be doing as they would be done by; and that, if God was so severe, what would become of the best of us sinful mortals?

"Very

"Very true," replied Mr. Simpkins: "but, for the future, when Tom Lang is out of the way, I will milk the cows myself sooner than let Joe Martin do it, for I will not trust the poor beasts to any one whom I know to be barbarous. All the fault poor Colley committed, as I understand, was kicking down the pail."

"I suppose he used her roughly," said Mrs. Simpkins; "and that made her kick, in order to keep him at a distance."

"Most likely so indeed!" replied old Mrs. Simpkins; "for it is natural for dumb creatures to defend themselves."

"However it was," said the farmer, "it was a cruel trick, and he deserves a good trimming for it: but I must go and pay the men." When he returned he ordered a mug of ale, and a bit of bread and cheese; and then sat down to settle the weekly accounts; and desired Richard Bruce to look for Joe Martin, who had run away and hid himself, being afraid of a scolding from his mistress. To be sure he deserved it, and his conscience told him so; and if any thing could have made Mrs. Simpkins scold, it would have been beating the cows: but she was a very meek-tempered woman, and left the correction of the boys to her husband, who, when Richard returned with Joe, desired the latter to go to bed without his supper, which was all the punishment he inflicted upon him; but assured him, that if ever he knew him guilty of the like offence, he would try to make him feel as much pain as he gave the poor beast. Tom Lang was come in; so the whole party set themselves down: and while the farmer settled his books, Mrs. Simpkins worked at her needle; her mother-in-law knitted; Richard, Roger, and Tom, washed and combed themselves, that they might not have it to do in the morning.

C H A P. IV.

THE next day being Sunday, the farmer and his family, in turns, read the whole history of the Flood, as it is related in the fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth chapters of Genesis.

When they had ended, Richard Bruce said, it was very moving to hear of so many men, women, and children, being drowned; but, without doubt, they were all sad wicked wretches, or God would not have destroyed them.

Mr. Simpkins said, that was no certain rule to judge by in every case, for it sometimes happened that *good* people perished with the *wicked*, when God's judgments were in the earth; but if God saw fit to cut them off from this world, he would recompense them in a better. However, it was plain, he said, from the scriptures, that all the people who dwelt on the earth at the time of the flood, excepting Noah and his family, were notoriously wicked; for *every imagination of the thought of their hearts were only evil continually: they were corrupt; and the earth was filled with violence.* No wonder, therefore, that God spared none, because those who remained might have corrupted the next generation."

Old Mrs. Simpkins observed, that there was one thing that puzzled her greatly; which was, that God is said to have *repented* making man: "Now this," said she, "seems as if God sometimes changes his purposes; which cannot be the case, as he always knows beforehand what will happen, and what it will be proper for him to do."

"True, mother," replied Mr. Simpkins; "but, my good master, Mr. Brown, told me, that all we are to understand from this expression is, that God did what he would not have done, had not men been so very wicked that they were not fit to live: for he
desireth

directeth not the death of ONE sinner, much less of thousands, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live. It appears," said he, "to have been the determination of God, from the beginning of the world, that when any city, or kingdom, became sinful, to a certain degree, it should be destroyed by some signal judgment: if, then, the whole earth was so, it was but just it should be destroyed. But God did not bring a sudden destruction upon the earth, for the ark was many years in building, during which time Noah tried all he could to convert the people to righteousness; and I dare say, if any had repented, and put their trust in God, the ark would have been made bigger to receive them, or more arks built."

Tom Lang said, he should have liked to have seen the ark; he supposed it was a mortal large ship.

"No, Tom," replied his master; "I have read that it was built more in the form of a farm house, with stalls and cabins for the lodgment of men and beasts; and a sloping covering at the top, like the roof of a house, for the wet to run off.

"I wonder, master," said Roger Hicks, "how Noah and his sons managed to catch all the birds, and make the beasts go into the ark: if the beasts had been like the hog I drove from market the other day, they would have had a nation bad job of it!"

"You may be sure, Roger," answered Mr. Simpkins, "that God Almighty, with whom all things are possible, caused the birds and beasts to go, as it were, of their own accord. Who but God teaches the birds to build nests? and who makes great horned beasts to yield to men?"

Richard Bruce said, that he did not mean to find fault with the ways of God, that would be very wicked; but yet he could not think for what reason
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the poor beasts were drowned : as they could not commit wickedness, why should they suffer for the sins of men ?”

“ That is a hard question, Richard,” replied the farmer ; “ but, as Abraham said on another occasion, *shall not the Judge of all the earth do right ?* It was certainly a good thing for the men who were preserved in the ark, that the beasts and birds should perish ; for had they all been spared when mankind were drowned, there would have been such numbers of wild beasts and birds of prey, that the few people who were left would have lived in constant terror ; and the tame beasts would have run straggling about in continual danger of being devoured ; and, as it was the lot of those creatures to *die once*, it made little difference to them at what time their death happened ; and, perhaps, the manner of their death was easier than any other way would have been, for God could render their sufferings short. I verily believe that no evil which innocent beasts ever suffered from the hand of God was equal to the pains and misery they endure from the cruelty of man ; for God is merciful when provoked to judgment ; but man is often cruel without any provocation at all.”

“ I think, master,” said Richard Bruce, “ that it is very wonderful that such creatures as oxen and cows should submit to man. They certainly would not if the Almighty had not implanted in them a natural dread of us. How happy we may think ourselves that they are so tame and tractable ! for if they were as wild and fierce as some beasts I once saw at a fair, they would tear us all to pieces ; and if they had *reason and speech*, as we have, they would make us *their* servants, instead of submitting to be *ours*.”

“ Aye, Richard,” said old Mrs. Simpkins, “ God Almighty orders all things for the best. What poor, naked, miserable wretches, should we be, if we had

no power over the beasts? we should perish with cold and hunger; or be obliged to eat one another, as I have heard some savages do."

"Beasts are very serviceable indeed!" said Mr. Simpkins. "What could we farmers do without the help of cattle? how could we plow our land, carry our corn to market, and do a thousand other things, if we had not horses to help us? Brutes, therefore, have as much right to food and kind treatment, as the men and boys have to the victuals they eat, and the money that is paid them; and I will never be the man that shall wrong them of it, or encourage others to do it. My good master, Mr. Brown, told me, that God Almighty made all creatures to enjoy happiness, and share the good things of the world, according to their several natures. It is plain," continued he, "from what I have been reading, that God Almighty takes account of dumb creatures, or he would not have preserved some of each sort in the ark, nor have ordered Noah to lay up food to keep them alive while they were shut up there; neither would he have *remembered* every living thing that was with Noah, and taken them into covenant with him."

"I don't understand what a covenant is, master," said Tom Lang. "I will tell you then," said the farmer, "A covenant, Tom, is an agreement made between two or more parties to do or perform something. It is usual, among men, to write covenants on paper or parchment; and the parties concerned set their names, and put their seals, as tokens that they bind themselves to perform what they promise by the covenant."

"And did God Almighty write such a covenant?" said Tom. "No," answered Mr. Simpkins; "but *He speaks the word*, and appointed the *rainbow* as a token. These are more binding than any human signature or token; for God is faithful and never

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never faileth to perform his promises, and he afterwards caused the covenant to be recorded in the Scriptures; and there it remains to this day, and the rainbow appears in the sky, as you very well know. I intend," continued the farmer, "to get some good scribe, to copy the covenant out for me on a large sheet of paper; and it shall be hung up in the house, where all of you may frequently see it, in order to put you in mind that *God's mercy is over all his works*, and teach you to *be kind to dumb creatures*; for shall God establish his covenant, his everlasting covenant, with every living thing, and shall we despise and abuse his creatures?—What do you think of yourself," added he, "Joe Martin, for using the poor cow so ill yesterday?" Joe made no reply, but looked sulky; on which his master went on: "It is my duty, Joe," said he, "to regard the happiness of all the creatures God has been pleased to commit to my care, and to provide for their ease and comfort. You would not think it enough that I kept from using *you* ill *myself*, if I suffered your *fellow-servants* to beat and abuse you: in such a case you would be ready to complain. But Colley, poor Colley! cannot tell her story. I found, by her moanings, that something was the matter; but if I had not caught you in the fact, she could never have made me sensible how ill you had treated her; and might have gone about, full of bruises, without any pity. If God Almighty cares for all dumb creatures, surely I ought to care for a gentle cow, that supplies my dairy with milk, butter, and cheese; otherwise I do not deserve such good things. Suppose, Tom, that God Almighty should cause all the cows to die, only think what a loss that would be to the world; a much greater than the same number of wicked boys. *A righteous man, says the wise king Solomon, regardeth the life of his beast; but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel: so that he who is himself cruel to his*

his beast, is a *wicked* man; and he who does not see that he *has his right*, is an *unrighteous* man. For my part, I am resolved, while I have beasts, to make them as happy as their nature and condition will admit."

"I think," said Mrs. Simpkins, "it is a sad thing that we are obliged to kill living creatures to eat; I should be contented to live upon garden-stuff and milk all my days, rather than have any thing killed on purpose for me."—"And so should I," said her good mother-in-law: "but if they were not some of them to be killed, they would soon eat us, or at least make a famine in the land, which would occasion our deaths and theirs also; in which case they would suffer a great deal more than they do in the way we put them to death."

"Whenever I read about Noah and his family coming out of the ark," said Mrs. Simpkins, "I think to myself, how joyful they must have felt, and how their hearts must have glowed with thankfulness to God, when they first set their feet upon the solid earth, and saw a clear sky over their heads after such a long dismal confinement."

"Without doubt they did, my dear," said the farmers: "and we ought to be equally thankful every time we walk on the ground and view the sky; for it is the same Providence that preserves us from floods of water, and a thousand other evils which the Almighty has power to inflict, though he does not act by us in so striking a manner as by Noah and his family. To the care of that merciful God, let us therefore now recommend ourselves, and all our affairs; and let us pray that he will graciously send us fruitful seasons, and give us hearts to be grateful for his blessings. This prayer ended, the whole family retired to rest; and Joe promised he would never be cruel to the cattle any more."

C H A P. V.

It was mentioned before that Joe Martin formerly lived with another farmer. The name of this person was Mills: his father and mother had been very laborious people; but they attended to little besides what they call the *main chance*, that is to say, getting money; which they would do if money was to be got; for they practised a hundred sly tricks, such as mixing bad grain with good, chalking two marks for one on a milk score, and so on, till they scraped together money enough to purchase the farm-house they lived in, and part of the land, and stock it well. This, with two hundred pounds in money, they left to William, who was their only child.

“*Goods ill gotten,*” says the proverb, “*never prosper:*” and so it proved here; for Will soon spent what his father and mother had saved. There was in the neighbourhood a young woman, named Patty Goodyer, a flaunting dressy lass, who was always flirting about with one young fellow or another. She used often to dance with Will Mills at fairs and wakes; so, as soon as his father and mother were dead, he married her; and as they had both of them a deal of pride and vanity, they set off with making a figure and a flash, and pretended to be topping farmers, and quite grand folks.

Mrs. Mills, being fond of company, went to see Mrs. Simpkins soon after she came into the neighbourhood; but when she returned, made great game of her and her mother, because they were such plain dressing people. Mrs. Simpkins did not at all like Mrs. Mills; but as she wished to live in harmony with her neighbours, she took occasion one leisure day to return the visit: and her husband walked along with her. Their arrival was quite unexpected by Mrs. Mills; and they found her in a most terrible pickle, with her gown scarcely pinned, her hair quite

quite blowfy, and her handkerchief and other things very untidy. She had two little children with her, who were playing about in frocks, that had been white; and gauze caps, with a quantity of flowers and ribbon, but so dirty, that it was really shocking to see them; and the poor little creatures faces were so besmeared with apple and gingerbread, that, though pretty children, they looked quite disagreeable.

Farmer Mills was not at home, being engaged in some drinking party with his boon companions. Mr. Simpkins said he would take a turn in the garden; and Mrs. Mills begged Mrs. Simpkins would do the same while she dressed herself. They accordingly went into what she called the garden; but it was more like a wilderness, for it was overgrown with weeds, and afforded scarcely any vegetables fit to come to table: but there were numbers of apple and pear-trees, and a great quantity of currant and gooseberry bushes, upon which the fruit had withered for want of gathering. Mr. Simpkins, who was very fond of a garden, was quite vexed to see such a good bit of ground going to ruin in that manner; but was soon called into tea by Mrs. Mills, who had made herself as fine as a lady, and dizened her children out, and ordered a fire in what she called her best parlour, where there was every thing very tasty; festoon window curtains, a looking-glass in a gilt frame, a carpet, and a smart set of tea-things.

Mrs. Simpkins drank a dish or two of tea, because she thought it would be rude to refuse, but the farmer begged to be excused, and wished for a glass of ale instead of it: but this was not to be had, for Mrs. Mills said her husband never drank ale; so he said perhaps they had a little cyder or perry, or a glass of their own made wine. Mrs. Mills replied that her husband would not drink such poor stuff, and therefore she never made any; but if Mr. Simpkins chose

a dram of brandy or rum, a glass of shrub, or a bottle of port, she could help him to them. The good farmer was quite ashamed of having asked for any thing, and thanked Mrs. Mills; but said he would walk round the grounds while she and his wife drank their tea.

Farmers wives who are cleanly have generally a pride in shewing their houses to visitors; and Mrs. Simpkins had taken Mrs. Mills into every part of hers, which was always neat and in order, from the garret to the cellar. She had great curiosity to see Mrs. Mills's; and so often hinted it by saying it was a pleasant place, and seemed to be very convenient, and so on, that Mrs. Mills could not help taking her up stairs; but excused herself from shewing her all the rooms, because it was washing week, she said, and they were in a litter.

The chamber into which she took her was a very handsome one: there was a flowered cotton bed, with a white counterpane, mahogany chairs, bedside carpets, and a toilet table with a dressing-glass, to which a Scotch gauze veil was tied with bows of blue ribbon; and the table was covered with dressing-boxes, which she had bought at some sale.

Mrs. Simpkins said nothing; but thought it rather too much for folks in their little way. When she came down stairs, she found the two children in the parlour; one of whom had a little blind kitten, about five days old, which she squeezed by the neck, and then flung down upon the floor. The other child had a young puppy which she kept holding to the old cat, who clawed him in the face till he whined sadly.

Mrs. Mills was greatly diverted at this scene, and said "How droll it is!" But Mrs. Simpkins, whose heart ached at seeing such barbarity, replied, that she never could find any sport in tormenting poor dumb creatures. "How should you like," said she, "Mrs. Mills, to have your children squeezed and

and banged about in that way, and frightened out of their wits?" Mrs. Mills coloured, and replied, She hoped there was some difference between her children and kittens and puppies. Mrs. Simpkins answered, that she meant no offence; and began talking, as her husband had done to his family, about their being made out of the dust as well as we: but it was all like Latin and Greek to Mrs. Mills, and she would not believe that such creatures had feeling.

In the midst of their conversation, a boy, who was a neighbour's son, came in with a mouse-trap, in which was a little prisoner, that kept running from side to side, endeavouring to make its escape; but all in vain. This he gave to Mrs. Mills's youngest child. The cruel boy had another mouse, to the tail of which he had tied a string; this he presented to the eldest child, and said she need not be afraid of its biting, for he had drawn all its teeth. The child, eager to divert herself with it, flung it down, and began dragging it about; but fortunately for the poor thing, old puss caught it, and put it out of its misery at one gripe. Delighted at the cat's dexterity, the other child opened the door of the trap, in order to give puss some more sport; but the little creature, with a palpitating heart, escaped into a hole, and was out of sight in an instant, to the great joy of Mrs. Simpkins, who could not help chiding the boy for his barbarity, telling him, that if he were a son of hers she would send for a doctor to draw all his teeth for him, and then he would know what he had made a poor little mouse suffer.

"Sure," said Mrs. Mills, "there is no sin in catching rats and mice?"—Not if they are mischievous to us," replied Mrs. Simpkins: "but if we keep a good cat or two, they will clear our house: for it is their nature to eat mice and rats. For my part I cannot bear to set traps; and never do, unless mice come in places where cats cannot be trusted.

Just as she ended these words, Mrs. Mills gave a

violent scream, which alarmed her visiter, and frightened the children. This was occasioned by her discovering a spider that was crawling on her handkerchief. As soon as Mrs. Simpkins knew what was the matter, she relieved her from her fears by taking the insect off, which she put out at the window. Mrs. Mills soon recovered herself; and expressed her astonishment that the other could touch a spider, declaring that the sight of one always made her ready to go into fits. "I cannot see any thing to dread in them," said Mrs. Simpkins: "they have much more reason to be afraid of us, considering the destruction we make among them; and when they drop down so suddenly as they do, 'tis with a view of escaping from us."—"Why did you not kill it?" said Mrs. Mills.—"Because," replied Mrs. Simpkins, "I did not see any harm it was likely to do; and I do not like to kill any thing, unless I am obliged to do it."—"Then you don't care how many cobwebs you have, I suppose?" said Mrs. Mills. "I cannot say I like cobwebs," replied Mrs. Simpkins: "but by making it a rule to sweep them down, and take the bags away, I have obliged the spiders to forsake the house—and let them spin in the roofs, or any place out of sight, and welcome."

Mrs. Mills declared she could never get the better of her fears of spiders; and it was just the same, she said, in respect to frogs, and toads, and eels. Mrs. Simpkins said that it was very unfortunate to be so timorous; but she should suppose any body might get the better of it, if they would try.

At this instant came in two tall greyhounds, which jumped up on Mrs. Mills; then on the chairs; and racketed about as if they had never been used to any command. Mrs. Simpkins thought it very strange that a person who was so afraid of a spider should have no dread of creatures so much more capable

pable of doing mischief, and set it down in her mind as a fancy which might be subdued.

From the cieling of the room hung two bird-cages. Mrs. Simpkins looked up in expectation of hearing the birds sing; but observed that one, which was a linnet, appeared as if his feathers were all dropping off, and the other sat panting with his head under his wing; on which, she inquired whether the birds were ill? Mrs. Mills answered, that she did not know, for she seldom troubled her head about them. Mrs. Simpkins begged of her to look, for she said such little tender creatures might be dead before she was aware. Mrs. Mills called the maid to take them down; when it appeared that the careless girl had neglected to clean the cages, till the birds were full of vermin; and had turned the mouth of the water-glass on one side, so that the poor canary was famishing with thirst, with plenty of water in view. Mrs. Mills gave the maid a good scolding; but, as soon as she was gone, said she should not have cared if the birds had died, and she wished to get rid of them, for she hated their screaming. Mrs. Simpkins replied, that she thought birds delightful creatures; and though she did not like to confine them in cages, should be glad to have these if Mrs. Mills would give them to her, who readily agreed to the proposal.

Mrs. Simpkins then turned the conversation to housewifery; and inquired how many cows Mrs. Mills kept, and whether her dairy was profitable? To which the other answered that two cows had died lately, and she had only two left, for she was the unluckiest creature in the world, as she could not get a good dairy-maid, though she was for ever changing, and nobody could think how her milk and cream was wasted; and, as for butter, what little they had made, was not fit to send to market. Nor was she more fortunate with poultry, for she

scarcely reared turkies, geese, ducks, and chickens enow for her own table; the fowls laid away, and the maid neglected them so.

Mrs. Simpkins understood, from this account, that there was terrible management; but thought it was not good manners in her to find fault, and made no other answer than that *she* had sent a good deal of one thing or other to market. But, civil as she was, I do not think she could have kept from speaking, had she gone into the dairy; for, surely, never was milk before kept in so dirty a way! If the dairy was in this pickle, think what the hog-sties must be! In them a number of poor beasts were shut up, and all kinds of offal thrown to them, even the entrails of those hogs which were killed. At other times they were left for two days together without food, till they were ready to devour one another. The water in their troughs stunk; and you may suppose what kind of a condition the bottom of the sties and the sleeping holes were in. The consequence of this was, that the poor creatures were hide-bound and full of vermin, and horridly nasty besides; so that their flesh, when killed, would fetch no price at market. Nor were the calves a bit better managed at the time of suckling; so they turned to little account.

Just as Mrs. Mills and Mrs. Simpkins had entered into conversation, the good farmer came in and told his wife that it would soon be time for them to go home, as it was almost dark; but he expected the boys with a lantern, as there would be no moon to light them. At Mrs. Mills's earnest entreaty he drank a glass of wine, and eat a bit of seed-cake; and then he and his wife took leave, desiring their service to Mr. Mills. Mrs. Simpkins did not forget the birds, which were both put into a little trap-cage that had a partition in it; and she tied them up in a handkerchief, that the poor things might not be disturbed.

C H A P. VI.

THE party had not proceeded far before they heard a noise, and perceived a light; on which Mrs. Simpkins, who was a little timid, called out "What's that, Thomas?"—"Nothing that will harm us, I dare say," replied the farmer. "Oh," said Joe Martin, "It is only farmer Mills's men and boys going a bat-fowling."—"What can that be?" said Mrs. Simpkins. "Why I will tell you, Kitty" replied her husband; "for I have seen the sport, though I could never get up my heart to join it; it appeared to me so mean, as well as cruel. The poor little birds retire to rest, in places which Providence has allotted for their repose; here they turn their heads under their wings, and compose themselves to sleep, without the least suspicion of an enemy; when, all of a sudden, they are awakened by a violent shaking of the bushes—they hear a confused noise—they perceive an unusual light: all these things together confound them so, that they know not what to do; so fly to the light, and are caught in nets, and carried away by a set of unfeeling boys, who often use them in the most cruel manner. "This," added he, "is bat-fowling; and if it is not a *mean* employment, I do not know what is so. To go creeping about in the dark, to surprise poor little creatures who have no way of defending themselves!—scorn it, my boys! scorn it!" said he, addressing himself to the boys. "That I will, master, for one!" said Tom Lang.

"But suppose, master," said Joe Martin, "there should be such a mortal swarm of birds, that if they were not killed they would devour the corn, would

there be any harm in bat-fowling them?—had not they better be caught so than take the chance of having their wings and their legs broke by gun-shot afterwards?”—“ I dont know what to say in such a case, Joe,” answered the farmer; “ but whoever goes a bat-fowling should take care to have as good a reason for it as that you mention, otherwise it would be, as I said before, mean and cruel.”

Mrs. Simpkins then related what sufferings the poor little birds they were carrying home had endured, and her motive for accepting them. “ So far from wishing to confine birds in cages,” said she, “ I would sooner give up a great deal of fruit, to have the pleasure of seeing them at liberty, and hearing them sing in the open air; but I thought it was an act of mercy to take these. I cannot help thinking, my dear,” added she, “ that singing birds are appointed by God as musicians for us country people, to make us cheerful, and to teach us to rejoice and sing, while we behold the beauties of the groves and fields.”

“ What do you say, then, to spoiling birds’ nest, Kitty?” said the farmer.

“ I think,” replied Mrs. Simpkins, “ that it is wanton cruelty unless it is done to prevent those birds from being hatched who must be killed if they are suffered to come into life; but this is seldom thought of—the poor little creatures labours are destroyed merely for sport. Only consider what a curious thing a bird’s nest is, and what pains it must cost such little creatures, who have no tools but a beak and claws to build it with. Think also how closely the hens sit upon their eggs; which shews that they have a great desire to hatch them; and the close attendance which both birds give to their young ones is a proof that they feel a very strong love and affection

fection for them. Now who," added Mrs. Simpkins, "would render all these pains and care fruitless, and destroy so much pleasure and happiness only for the sake of diverting themselves?"

"What father or mother, among mankind," said Mr. Simpkins, "would like to have their houses, with all their goods, seized on, themselves left without so much as a bed to lie on, and their children carried away, they know not whither? What child would like to be torn from its tender parents, crammed with poisonous food, and shut up in a little prison, where he could not be at liberty even to stretch his limbs? Yet this is often the fate of a nest of pretty birds; whilst the boy who has seized it rejoices in his prize, and thinks nothing of the misery he inflicts, but even sometimes carries his cruelty so far as to tie a string to a young bird, and torment it with the hope of escaping, till perhaps a limb is broke, or it flutters and fatigues itself to death. Now," continued Mr. Simpkins, addressing himself to the boys, "if such hardships were inflicted on you, if you were dragged about so, and had your limbs broke, would you not make loud complaints? Let me beg of you, therefore, Tom and Joe, to do as you would be done by, if you were birds: and do not treat poor things in that manner, who, though they cannot speak to make their distresses known to us, certainly suffer a deal of pain and misery."

The boys promised they would never take young birds; but desired to know whether they might not take birds' eggs? The farmer replied, No, he could but shoot the sparrows, he said, if he found a necessity of destroying them to preserve his corn; and this he should be sorry to do, neither would he, if he could have them frightened away, "It is hard enough, I sometimes think," continued he, "for the poor things to be driven from what appears a tempting

tempting feast to them: but this we farmers must do, or we should have no bread to eat ourselves, nor any corn to supply the markets with; and the birds may find other food, such as plaintain, groundsel, and berries of various kinds; and they have had wings given them on purpose that they may fly about and seek it.

In this manner the good farmer and his wife conversed, till they arrived at home; when she went up stairs and pulled off her best clothes, lest they should get damaged; and then brought down her husband's every-day coat, and put his Sunday's coat carefully by.

It has been mentioned, that Mrs. Mills made great game of Mrs. Simpkins's manner of dressing; I will therefore describe it, and then my readers may judge for themselves, who appeared the most in character for the wife of a man who lived on a *small* farm, where it was necessary to make the most of every thing, in order to get forward in the world, and who had not either by birth or education, any claim to gentility. As Mrs. Simpkins had lived a long while with Mrs. Brown, and all the family respected her, and approved her marriage, they resolved to treat her with her wedding garments; and the choice of her gown was left to herself; she therefore fixed upon a neat quaker-colour silk and stuff, which her mistress bought her; and also a white stuff petticoat, quilted in small diamonds. The gown was made with robins and laced before with white satin ribbon, and it had no train.

Mrs. Bennet insisted on making the cap; and told her that, as she was going to be a farmer's wife, and the mistress of a family, she might dress a little better than when she was a maid servant: however, Kitty entreated that it might not be too dressy, as she thought there ought to be a difference between
such

such folks as she and the topping farmers wives. Mrs. Bennet accordingly endeavoured to suit it to her taste, and made it of fine lawn, with a pretty edging and a snug crimped-wire border, and trimmed it with white ribbon, pinned on in very exact puffs, and a bow before and behind; it had also a lappet trimmed with the same edging, which went behind the ribbon, and came a little below the ears, but no ribbon streamers.

Mrs. Bennet also made her a present of a clear double muslin handkerchief, with a narrow worked border, a pair of robins to match it, and a clear lawn apron.

Mr. Bennet gave her a neat black cloak and bonnet; and Mr. Brown, her mistress's son, bought her a pair of silver buckles, and a pair of white silk mittens.

These things Mrs. Simpkins was married in; and they were her best apparel for many years; and, when put on with exactness, they looked all together very handsome, however Mrs. Mills might despise them.

The furniture of her house was of a piece with her dress: but that I shall have occasion to describe in another place.

C H A P. VII.

WHEN the family sat down to supper Roger Hicks was missing; and on inquiry the farmer found from Richard Bruce, that Tom Lang and Joe Martin had been playing tricks with Roger, till they made him so angry that he went to the alehouse to get out of the way. This account vexed Mr. Simpkins a good deal; and he told the boys they were
a couple

a couple of boobies. Their only excuse was, that Roger was foolish, and they could not help laughing at him.

"I don't know what you call foolish!" said the farmer. "He may talk a little *oddish*, and not be so *cute* as you are, Tom Lang; but I am sure he is as good-natured a fellow as ever lived in a house, and minds his work as well; and he shan't be tormented under my roof. He does justice both by man and beast: and if he has the sense to do all that, he is wiser than many that make game of him. God Almighty," continued the farmer, "has made a difference among mankind, by giving some men more wit, and some more strength, and so on, that they may help and receive help from one another; and not for them to ridicule their fellow-creatures. However you boys may pride yourselves in your sharpness," added he, "there are people in the world who are a hundred and a hundred times cleverer than either of you: therefore let us have no more of your pranks. If Roger comes home drunk, the sin will partly lie at your door."

Just as he spake these words, Roger came staggering in, to the great concern of the farmer and all the family; for though the boys could have found in their hearts to have had some fun with him, they were sorry to see him come home tipsey, fearing it would increase their master's anger against them: but he was prevented saying any more to them immediately, by being obliged to attend to Roger, who, as soon as he sat down, was very sick, and afterwards so headstrong, that he could not be prevailed on to go to bed till he had sung "*Sir John Barleycorn*." However, at last he yielded: and as the farmer did not like to go to rest till he had composed himself, instead of saying any more to the boys, he said family prayers as usual,
in

in which he did not fail to implore divine grace for the government of the temper.

The next morning Roger awoke with the head-ach, so that he could not get up at the usual hour to go to his work. When the rest of the family assembled at breakfast, the farmer began talking to the boys again, not in anger, but as a friend.

"I hope," said he, "Tom and Joe, you are sorry for carrying your jokes so far upon Roger; indeed it was very wrong in you. Now, poor fellow, he is obliged to lie in bed with the head-ache, while my work is neglected. Suppose he had tumbled into a pit, and been killed, or come to any other accident, while he was in liquor, would not you have been unhappy all your lives? Be advised by me; leave off that foolish trick, and try to live in peace with your fellow-servants, instead of driving them into sin."

The boys promised to obey their master, and also to work the harder, in order to help Roger; and went out with Richard Bruce.

As soon as Roger heard them go, he got up, and came down stairs, but looked very foolish. Mrs. Simpkins and her mother-in-law pitied him, and resolved not to say any thing about his frolic: but his master thought it his duty to speak to him; and began with asking him how he did? To which Roger answered, that he had a deadly bad head-ache. "No wonder indeed!" said Mr. Simpkins: "I hope it will be a warning to you, Roger, not to get drunk any more." Roger said he did not think he should of one while; but any man might be overcome with liquor one time or another: and those who drove him to the alehouse must answer for the sin of it. "For *their own* sin, Roger," replied the farmer; "but not for *yours*. You have sense enough to know, nay, you have lately heard the parson say
in

in the pulpit, that it is a very wrong thing to get fuddled; and you might have helped doing so, if you would. It is a very common thing," continued the farmer, "not only for drunkards, but for passionate people, to comfort themselves as you now do, that those who provoked them are alone to blame; but they are very much mistaken. A person who tries to work another up into a passion, is guilty of a sin, whether he succeeds or not, and for that *he* must account; but the person who suffers his temper to be wrought into a heat is as guilty as he, because God has commanded that *we should not give place unto wrath*: and there is no doubt but that what *HE* has made our duty, he will give us strength to perform, if we try to do so. *He that is slow to wrath*, (says the wise king Solomon) *is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city*. And the apostle James says, *Let every one be slow to wrath*. Think of these things, Roger, and be upon your guard another time: and let me advise you to take no notice to the boys of what has passed; I dare say they will not tease you any more." Roger replied, that they deserved a good basting; and he had had thoughts of giving it them: however, it should be as his master pleased. He then went out; and finding that the boys had taken care of his horses, and done all they could for him, he came into a good humour, went to work, and the air entirely cured his head-ache.

C H A P VIII.

MRS. SIMPKINS and her mother-in-law, having done their bustling work, sat down in the afternoon, one to her needle, the other to knitting; when they
soon

soon fell into conversation concerning the visit to Mrs. Mills, whom, as nobody was by but her mother, Mrs. Simpkins ventured to blame very freely for her ill management in respect to the farming business. She said she thought, for her part, that *industry* and *thrift* were both very necessary for farmers wives, and for all people who wished to get forward in the world; and that it was very wrong to trust entirely to servants; for the *best storekeeper was the mistress's eye*. Not that she approved of stinginess; for she thought a maxim which her poor dear master, Mr. Brown, often repeated was a very good one; *Be frugal, that you may be generous*: for people who save properly have more to give than those who suffer waste and extravagance in housekeeping.

"Only think," added she, "what a difference it would make at the year's end, should a number of poultry die off, our hens lay away, or the milk and cream be slopped about in the dairy."

"Very true," replied her mother: "but you have none of these things to lay to your charge; nor, I hope, to mine either?"

"That I have not!" replied the daughter; "for I believe you are as tender over the poultry as if they were your children."

"I look upon them as my children," said old Mrs. Simpkins, "as far as their happiness goes. Poor things! many of them will have but *short* lives, and I should be sorry to hinder them from having *happy* ones. I hardly know a greater pleasure than in going early of a morning to the poultry-yard. No sooner do the creatures hear my step, than a cackling and chirping begins; and when I open the gate, it is very diverting to see the bustle. To be sure they have not much manners, for they fly over one another's backs to be first served; and sometimes get upon my head and shoulders."

"It

"It is very droll indeed," replied Mrs. Simpkins; "and, I think, improving too: I never enter the poultry-yard of a morning without repeating to myself, naturally as it were, part of a hymn which I learnt at the charity-school when I was a little girl.

*"The beasts, and fowls, and all their brood,
Come night and morning for their food;
The hand that feedeth them they know,
And to it grateful homage shew.*

*"Shall Christians, then, the hand above
Not know, who daily pours down love,
And blessings from his boundless stores;
Who feeds and keeps both us and ours?"*

*"Let man and wife, each little one,
And servant, morn and evening, join
In every household, rich and poor,
Our God and Father to adore,
From this time forth for evermore!"*

Old Mrs. Simpkins said, the sight of them was enough to bring those pretty verses to mind; and she thought there were other lessons besides to be learnt in a poultry-yard. "Of all things," said she, "I admire the tenderness of hens for their chicks. It were well if all mothers who call themselves Christians would take pattern by them: they are never idle, but always doing something for their families. Don't you remember that our Saviour compares his love for the Jews to that of a hen for her young. So it is plain we ought to take example from the creatures."

"I should," said Mrs. Simpkins, "think it a sin to take their young till the time comes for their leaving them to shift for themselves: neither can I bear
to.

to shut fowls up a fattening where they can see other fowls at liberty; and, as for *cramming*, I will not do it if I never send a fowl to market; nor will I ever eat any but barn-door fowls myself. I am sure it grieves me to have any poultry killed; but it must be so, for the world would be too full of them if all were suffered to live; and, besides our own maintenance depends in some measure on the selling them; and my comfort is, that they are dead in an instant. I can't think how some folks can be so hard-hearted as to cut chickens heads off without first wringing their necks. I declare I have, before now, seen poor creatures fluttering their wings, in seeming agony, half an hour after they had lost their heads. How barbarous it is to tease poor hens by making them hatch duck-eggs! I am sure I have felt a great deal for hens which I have seen in distress on this account. Hens seem by nature to be very fearful; and they have many enemies to dread, hawks, and foxes, and rats, and I know not what: it is therefore very cruel to give them any cause for fear, besides what is natural to them."

"It is very wrong indeed!" said old Mrs. Simpkins. "If a woman would but think what she suffers when she is afraid her child will be drowned, she could not put a hen to such torture. When I hear one screaming after a brood of ducklings, I cannot help fancying to myself that she is perhaps saying in her way, 'Come back, my dears, come back; you will be drowned! and what will then your poor mother do? Come out of the cold element, which will freeze and benumb your tender limbs, and let me gather you under my warm wings. Will no kind goose or duck save my darlings?'"

"Such thoughts will come into the heads of tender-hearted people, mother," said the daughter; "but some folks have hearts of flint towards *dumb creatures*:
though

though I don't think that, properly speaking, they are quite *dumb*: for if you mind, birds make several kinds of noises, which I am sure signify different things; for you know that a fowl will give notice, by a particular noise, that there is food to be had. This sets the whole poultry-yard in motion. Another kind of noise makes each brood run to its own mother. The master cock, with a terrible voice, and a threatening look, commands the others to keep at a distance; and then, with a milder note, invites his favourite hens to come and eat what he has provided: and the hens, by a particular cackling, which *we* have learnt to understand, gives notice when she has laid an egg."

"Very true, Kitty! very true;" replied old Mrs. Simpkins: "many a dumb beast, as well as fowl, have made me understand them, as well as if they could speak. How many stories have you and I heard about dogs that have saved their masters lives by the signs they made, and their barking!"

"Aye, dogs are useful creatures; and I do like them," said Kitty: "and yet I cannot help wishing to have them kept in their proper places, because they make so much dirt. 'Tis very pleasing to have them with one when one goes a walking; but I think a kennel, or a warm stable with a little clean straw, better for them to sleep in than the house; and it is all the same to them when they are used to it from the first. I am sure it would have vexed you to have seen the great greyhounds at Mrs. Mills's, how they ran about and dirtied the chairs and the floors. It is very disheartening when a woman, whether maid or mistress, has scrubbed a floor till her arms ache, to have a beast run all over it, and leave the marks of four feet every time he moves. I know I have felt very angry when visitors came in with dogs at Mr. Brown's; and have threatened vengeance
many

many and many a time; but I never could get up my heart to hurt the poor beasts."

"It would be cruel to hurt them," said the mother, "for, poor things, they think no harm. They know nothing about cleaning of floors, or, it is my thought, they would sooner lick off the dirt they make with their own tongues than vex us as they often do, for dogs are good-natured creatures, and seem to love mankind, so that they would do any thing they could to please us; and they ought not to be used as if they plagued us out of spite; and it is dreadfully barbarous not to feed them well."

"So it is," replied young Mrs. Simpkins: "and yet how many people will keep dogs who can hardly keep their families! I wonder poor folks, who know how pinching hunger is, have not more feeling than to do it. What use can either a cat or dog be of to those who have empty cupboards, and nothing in their houses worth guarding? It would be more charity to kill the poor beasts than to let them pine away in lingering misery."

"Now you talk of cats, Kitty," said the mother, "only think what they are made to suffer sometimes by-cruel boys, who delight in hunting and worrying them. I can't see what pleasure there can be in scar-ing poor beasts out of their wits: I wonder how any of them would like to be driven along, with a rabble rout at their heels, urging a parcel of dogs to tear them limb from limb?"

"It is my opinion," said young Mrs. Simpkins, "that one thing that makes boys so cruel to cats is, a notion some of them take in their heads that a cat has nine lives: now this is very nonsensical: for how can any body think that God Almighty would give more lives to one creature than to another, for no other reason in the world but that they might be put to death over and over again? If ever I have children,

den, I will endeavour to keep them from such out-of-the-way fancies, and shall teach them to be tender to cats, because they are such useful creatures. They shall not use them as Mrs. Mills's children used the poor blind kitten." She was going to tell how this was, when her husband entered with the joyful news that the red cow had got a fine calf; which put an end to the humane conversation of these worthy women, who immediately set about preparing some refreshment for the poor beast,

CH A P IX.

THE week after Mr. Simpkins had made remarks on the history of Noah's flood, he employed the schoolmaster of the village to copy out for him, in print-hand, partly in red and partly in black ink, the Everlasting Covenant with man and beast, and the Token of the Covenant, as follow :

T H E C O V E N A N T.

GOD *spake* unto NOAH
and to his sons with him, saying,
 AND I, BEHOLD I, ESTABLISH,
 MY COVENANT
 WITH YOU, AND
 WITH YOUR SEED AFTER YOU,
 AND WITH EVERY
 LIVING CREATURE
 THAT IS WITH YOU, OF THE
 FOWL, OF THE CATTLE,
 AND OF EVERY BEAST OF THE EARTH
 WITH YOU.

FROM

FROM ALL THAT GO OUT OF THE ARK,
TO EVERY BEAST OF THE EARTH.

AND

I WILL ESTABLISH MY COVENANT WITH YOU:
NEITHER SHALL ALL FLESH BE CUT OFF
ANY MORE BY THE WATERS OF A FLOOD;
NEITHER SHALL THERE ANY MORE BE A FLOOD
TO DESTROY THE EARTH.

THE TOKEN.

And GOD said,

This is the TOKEN of the Covenant
which I make between ME and you,
and every LIVING CREATURE that is with you,
for perpetual generations :

I DO SET MY BOW IN THE CLOUD,
and it shall be for a TOKEN of a COVENANT
between ME and the EARTH.

And it shall come to pass,
when I bring a Cloud over the Earth, that
THE BOW SHALL BE SEEN IN THE CLOUD ;
And I will remember my Covenant
which is between ME, and you,
and every Living Creature of all flesh ;
and the waters shall no more become a flood
to destroy all flesh.

AND THE BOW SHALL BE SEEN IN THE CLOUD ;
and I will look upon it, that I may remember

THE EVERLASTING COVENANT
BETWEEN GOD AND EVERY LIVING CREATURE
of all flesh, that is upon the Earth.

C

And

And GOD said unto Noah,
 THIS IS THE
TOKEN OF THE COVENANT,
 WHICH I HAVE ESTABLISHED BETWEEN ME
 AND ALL FLESH THAT IS UPON THE EARTH.

Genesis ix. 8—17.

These Mr. Simpkins pasted on sheets of stiff paper like almanacks, and put borders of black paper round them. They were brought home on Saturday evening; but Mr. Simpkins did not hang them up immediately, because he wished to do this with some solemnity, lest his family should read them, as too many other good things are read, without attention. On the Sunday, when they were all assembled in the parlour, and the Bible laid on the table, he produced them; and addressing himself to his servants, said, "Look here, my lads; this is a copy of the covenant I told you of; the **EVERLASTING COVENANT** *written in HEAVEN, and sealed with the RAINBOW.*" He then read it over distinctly; and afterwards reminded them of the history of the flood, which had been before read; wherein it was related that God, when he destroyed every living substance that was upon the face of the earth, remembered Noah and every living thing that was with him in the ark; the beasts, the birds, and even the very reptiles that crawled upon the earth.

He observed to them that it was the signs of *men*, and not of *brutes*, which brought destruction upon the earth; and added, that if they took notice of what at present passed in the world, they would see men wicked, and brutes innocent; and not only so, but ready to render us any service in their power; patiently enduring, for our benefit, toil and labour,
 and

and contented with such food as we cannot eat ourselves.

"I think, master," said Richard Bruce, "I remember reading, in the prophecy of Jonah, that God spared the city of Nineveh for the sake of the innocent children and the cattle: and who can tell but that our land may at this very time be spared for the same reason? God knows there is a deal of wickedness in it! I think, therefore, we should not abuse creatures, for whose sake, partly, a wicked city was saved."

"Very true, Richard," said the farmer: "and the prophet Jeremiah tells us, that *when the land mourneth, and the herbs of every field wither, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein, the beasts and the birds are consumed*. So that it is not God who is unmerciful to the brutes, but it is the cruelty and unmercifulness of men that provoke the Almighty to curse the land. We cannot think that a just God will let presumptuous sinners go on for ever without sending some judgment to punish them: but God knows how far it is right to cut them off."

Mr. Simpkins then desired Tom Lang to try to read the Covenant, which he did with great satisfaction; and after that the Token: but Joe Martin could only read words of one syllable. The farmer then hung them up in the parlour; and from that time made it a rule to have them read every Sunday.

Here the good farmer ended his lecture; for he was afraid of saying too much at one time, lest his servants should not remember it.

C H A P. X.

Farmer Simpkins afterwards employed the school-master to write out for him, in large print-hand,

The Golden Rule:

WHATSOEVER YE WOULD THAT MEN SHOULD
DO UNTO YOU, DO YE EVEN SO UNTO THEM.

The Summary of the Law and the Prophets.

THOU SHALT LOVE THE LORD THY GOD WITH
ALL THY HEART, AND WITH ALL THY SOUL;
AND THY NEIGHBOUR AS THYSELF.

These were hung up in the kitchen ; and the farmer begged his family would endeavour to imprint them on their hearts so deeply that they might remain to their lives' end. The Golden Rule, he told them, explains itself ; and those answers in the church catechism which relate to our duty to God and our neighbour, sufficiently explain the other. He recommended to them to learn those answers perfectly, and examine their conduct by them.

The next evening after Mr. Simpkins hung up the Everlasting Covenant, he had got his family about him, and was advising them to search the scriptures for directions how to act ; telling them, he had done so even from a child, and found the comfort and advantage of it on many trying occasions. As he spake the last words, Joe Martin called out, " I'll tell master of you, Tom ! " — " What's the matter now ? " cried the farmer. On which Roger Hicks replied that the boys had been wrangling and jangling all day : and Richard Bruce said that, though
Tom

Tom was a good boy for his work, and he never saw him use the cattle ill, he must say he had a foolish way of teasing his fellow-servants; and one day or other he would get his trimmings for it.

Mr. Simpkins said he was very sorry to hear such things of him, and indeed he had seen a little of it himself; but he would not allow it; for if it was wrong to ill treat the creatures below us, it must be so to be unkind to our equals. He added, that it was pity those who called themselves Christians would not observe the GOLDEN RULE of their divine Lord and Master JESUS CHRIST; which would restrain them not only from cruel actions, but from teasing, which often gave as much pain to the mind as blows to the body.

Joe Martin, encouraged by his master's taking his part, immediately began to complain that Tom had given him the nick-names of Coward and Cow-beater, for striking Colley.

"It certainly was a cowardly action, Joe," said Mr. Simpkins, "to beat and abuse an innocent, harmless beast, who has as much right to happiness as you have, and who has given you many a good meal: but I hope you will do so no more; and it is not Tom's business to correct you: neither is it right for fellow-servants, or indeed any people to call one another names; for, as the little hymn-book says,

*"Hard names at first, and threat'ning words,
That are but noisy breath,
May grow to clubs and naked swords,
To murder, and to death."*

How often do we see great quarrels arise from a word spoken in jest! Therefore, my lads, let me advise you to agree one with another; it will make your

lives pass as happily again—Don't be so touchy, Joe:—And do you, Tom, leave off working him up. When he is in a good humour, endeavour to keep him so; and when he is in a passion, answer him mildly, *for a soft answer turneth away wrath*; and he who wilfully leads another into sin, makes himself a partner in his guilt, and will be called to account for so doing at the great judgment day." He then desired the boys to shake hands, that they might go to bed in peace; and he begged they would make it a rule, never to let the sun go down on their wrath: "For if," said he, "you give way to anger, so as to go to bed with resentment in your heart, you will not be fit to say your prayers; and God will, perhaps, leave you to the temptations of the devil, who will lead you into hatred, malice, and revenge: and there is no knowing what wickedness you may commit. The best way is," continued he, "when a person finds himself angry, as every man is liable to be sometimes, to flee the occasion, and get by himself, and pray to God Almighty to enable him to keep his anger within just bounds, and to imitate the example of his blessed Saviour. To enforce this advice, Mr. Simpkins added this night, to the usual family devotions, a prayer which Mr. Brown had given him, *for a meek and quiet temper*; and then, with a mind perfectly serene, retired to rest in charity with all mankind.

C H A P X I.

In a short time, Farmer Mills drove his wife in a one-horse-chaise to see Mrs. Simpkins; for though it was not above two miles, she did not chuse to walk;

walk ; and was too proud to ride on a pillion. As Mills had learnt that Mr. Simpkins was not fond of drinking, and kept no better liquor than ale, he pretended to have an engagement with some friends at an inn in the market-town, and invited Mr. Simpkins to go along with him, assuring him that he would meet very jovial company : but the good farmer thought that should he go once, he would be expected to go again ; therefore begged to be excused ; but said that, as he had business to do in the town, if Mr. Mills would give him a cast thither he should be obliged to him : accordingly the other took him up in the chaise, and drove off ; telling his wife that she must get home on foot, for he could not fetch her.

Mr. Simpkins had a most uncomfortable ride ; for the poor horse was scarcely able to move with the chaise for want of strength ; and had been beat about and left in his harness till he was raw in some places ; yet Mills had no pity on him, but whipped and swore at him all the way ; nay, once he got out in a passion, and beat the poor beast about the head with the handle of his whip, and quite stunned him ; and this only because he started and stumbled a little, owing to his having been made, by cruel treatment, afraid of his own shadow.

Mr. Simpkins begged and entreated that Mills would have mercy ; but all in vain ; so was glad when he got to his journey's end.

After having dispatched his business, he returned home in one of his own carts, which went to carry some things to town. When he came thither, he found that his wife was gone part of the way with her guest ; on which he set off to meet her. As they walked along, he told her of Mills's barbarity, which shocked her exceedingly ; and she said, she had rather walk on foot all her life, than sit behind a horse to see it tortured in that manner. As for Mr. Simpkins, his head was so full of the subject, that he

could not help telling his family of Mills's cruelty ; and begged none of them would, at any time of their lives, do such things. He then told them, that on Sunday he would read the history of Balaam and his Afs; which he did ; and all parties seemed much entertained with it.

" I think," said Roger Hicks, " that Balak was very wicked in wanting to curse a whole nation. Pray, master, what had the Israelites done to provoke him to do so ?"

" Nothing at all," replied the farmer, " for they had been commanded not to molest the Moabites on account of Lot, from whom they descended ; but Balak does not appear to have known this ; and was afraid they would overcome his people, as they had done other nations : and I have read, in a book at Mr. Browns, that it was the custom among heathens to send for conjurors and such sort of people, at the beginning of a war, to curse their enemies in the name of their false gods, in hopes that these idols would help their worshippers ; and as Balaam was known to be a prophet of the God of Israel, Balak thought that if he could bribe him to curse God's people, their own God would destroy them."

" Bless me !" said Mrs. Simpkins, " what strange notions the heathen people had of God ! I am glad I am not one of them. But yet I do not well understand what Balaam's sin was, since he did not go without God's leave."

" His sin," said Mr. Simpkins, " as the book I just spoke of explained it, was this: Balaam went to Moab with a desire to obtain the rewards offered by Balak ; and would not have scrupled to curse the people of Israel, if God had not put a blessing in his mouth, and obliged him to utter it, whether he liked it or not."

" It appears," said old Mrs. Simpkins, " that Balaam was a very hard-hearted man, or he would not have used his poor Afs so."

" Yes,"

"Yes," replied Mr. Simpkins, "he was hard-hearted enough; and though I don't love to cast reflections upon a neighbour, I must say farmer Mills put me in mind of him the other day; and I could not help wishing his poor horse was able to speak: as he was not, I spoke for him as well as I could. The scripture says, *we should open our mouths for the dumb.*"

"And what did you say, master?" said Roger Hicks

"I told him," answered Mr. Simpkins, "that the beast was not to blame for starting, for he no more liked to be frightened than we did. It could be no more pleasure to him to make a false step, than it was to us; and that he felt more pain and jar from it than we. I begged him to consider, that while he enjoyed an easy seat the horse went afoot; that perhaps his shoe pinched him, or he might have trod upon a sharp flint, or a loose stone; that, in such a case, if he were walking he might stumble too; especially if he was at the same time terrified out of his wits by a beadle, or some such person, following him with a whip, while his own hands were tied behind him."

"What could farmer Mills say to this?" said Mrs. Simpkins.

"He said," replied the farmer, "that I did not understand driving; and that it would plague any one to see a horse so foolish; that he loved a beast of spirit:" but I could not help thinking he was the greatest fool of the two."

"Who could expect spirit in a horse that belonged to him?" said Richard Bruce: "*starving and beating* will tame a *savage beast*; and when we add hard labour to this, we cannot wonder that a poor dumb creature wants spirit."

"Well!" said Mr. Simpkins, let us leave farmer Mills to God and his own conscience; and, since we think these things wrong let us act better.

If at any time we find ourselves angry with a beast for doing contrary to our wishes, we should consider that he has not the gift of *reason* or *speech*; that if it is foolish in him to be afraid, our folly is greater than his if we do not try to get the better of our anger; that there is greater room to hope to overcome him by gentleness and good management than by whips and spurs; and, above all, let us think that though we see no angel in our way, there may be thousands that are witnesses of our conduct, and that God certainly sees us: and since it is written in the scriptures that he *once* interfered in favour of a beast, we may depend on it that he notes our treatment of dumb creatures, and regards cruelty to them as a sin: and I think its worth noticing, that this beast was an *Ass*; a creature that, of all brutes, is in these days doomed to suffer the greatest hardships, though our Saviour himself has recommended him to our mercy, by mentioning him as an object of compassion; and made his triumphant entrance into Jerusalem riding on an ass. This circumstance," continued Mr. Simpkins, "I think entitles the ass to some degree of respect among Christians; but, instead of that, you will see both men and boys mocking and abusing this kind of beast wherever it passes. One would take such folks for the servants of the very scribes and pharisees, who, on all occasions, insulted our LORD; for they appear to be instigated by secret malice, which the creature himself can have done nothing to deserve."

"I have seen many an harmless ass abused in my time," cried Roger Hicks. "There's Will Hill, the chimney-sweeper, deserves to have his bones broke, a little sooty rascal; not content with making the beast carry him and his soot too, he never mounts the back of the ass but he beats him the whole time and not only so, but gives him many a bang when he ought to be at rest, merely for sport. The

"The first time I catch him at it again, I will make him remember it."

Tom Lang said, that a few days before, he had met James Fowler, the sandman, driving a cart with two asses, which he had loaded to so unmerciful a degree, that one of them fell down dead; and after that he attempted to make the other go on by himself; and he supposed would have killed that too, had not he, according to his master's orders, taken a horse from his own cart to relieve him.

"Well!" said Mr. Simpkins; "unfeeling people will do many cruel and wonderful things; but depend on it, they are *sinners* in the sight of God; and, if they do not repent, will be judged for such offences."

"I have heard people," said Richard Bruce, "make game of the history of Balaam, and say it is impossible a beast could ever speak."

"Wicked people," answered the farmer, "will make game of any thing; but they don't consider that God is *almighty*, and therefore all things are possible to him: for my part, I firmly believe that the ass did speak distinct words; and I think the account of his doing so is put in the Bible on purpose to teach men mercy to brutes."

"What a wonderful book the Bible is!" said Mrs. Simpkins; "I am sure there is not another like it in the world: it teaches persons in all stations, what they ought to do at all times."

"Very true," answered Mr. Simpkins; "I do not believe there is any thing we have occasion to do throughout our lives, but we may find an *example* or a *precept* in the *scriptures* to instruct us how to act. Let us therefore praise God for the blessing of learning to read them; and pray to him for grace to make a right use of this knowledge." He then desired Mrs. Simpkins to join with him in one of Dr. Watts's Songs, entitled, "*Praise to God for learning to read*;" and then in that on "*The Excellency of the Bible*;" after which, he added, to the usual devotions,

the collect of the church for the second Sunday in Advent.

C H A P. XII.

ANOTHER Sunday Mr. Simpkins read the twenty-fourth chapter of Genesis: as soon as he had finished it, his wife expressed herself greatly delighted with the tenderness of Rebekah towards the poor camels, which she supposed were beasts that were used in those days instead of horses.

Tom Lang begged to know what sort of creatures they were; on which Richard Bruce said he once saw a camel that was shewn at a fair as a fight; and described it as a very tall beast, with a long neck, and long legs, and two bunches on its back, between which its loads are laid. He said that the man who shewed it, told him a camel would travel for eight days together without eating any thing but a ball of paste each day; and go for four or five days without drinking; and that one hour's rest in twenty-four was all that was allowed him on a journey, over deserts of sand, where there is not so much as a tree to shelter them.

Old Mrs. Simpkins said, that she supposed Abraham lived in that country, by his having so many camels; and observed, that it must be very hard work for a young woman to draw water for ten large beasts, which would drink a great deal at a time, as they drank so seldom. It was a sign, she said, that Rebekah was tender-hearted, or she would not have kept on drawing till they were satisfied.

Mrs. Simpkins remarked, that Laban was also very good to the poor beasts; for though he had got a nest that brought gold, and silver, and jewels, he attended to the camels in the first place; ungirded them, and gave them straw and provender enough,
before

before he set out any refreshment for Abraham's steward, and the men who were with him.

The farmer replied, that it was certainly right to take the first care of creatures which could not take care of themselves. He said, it often made his heart ache to see a poor beast, who had done hard work, and borne the burthen and heat of the day, left in harness, and neglected to be fed, while a cruel driver sat drinking and singing—at an alehouse. He then gave strict orders to his men and boys to take care that all his cattle had their meat in due season; that they ungirded them as soon as their labour was finished, and gave them provender enough: he also desired them to be sure and lead them away to watering; which, he said, altogether would not be half so much trouble as a young woman, nay, he might say, a young lady, had taken for the camels of a stranger.

Richard Bruce said, that since God had been pleased to provide food for all sorts of beasts, he thought men had no right to withhold it from them. He observed, that there were a great many texts of scripture that mentioned God's providence to different sorts of creatures.

"Yes," replied Mr. Simpkins, "King David points out several instances of God's goodness to them; and I remember in one place he calls God *the preserver of MAN and BEAST, who giveth food to all FLESH*; and in another he says, that *GOD sendeth springs into the vallies that run among the hills, that all the beasts of the field may drink thereof; that the wild asses may quench their thirst; and that the fowls of the air may have their habitation in the trees, nourished by their moisture, and sing among the branches*: and also, that *GOD bringeth forth grafs for the CATTLE, as well as herb for the service of man*."

"I wonder any people can be so silly," said Richard Bruce, "as to think all things in the world were made for MAN only, when the very psalm you

• Psalm xxxvi. 6. Psalm civ.

are

are talking of, master, tells the direct contrary. Does not David say, that *trees* are partly made *that the birds may build their nests?* and that, as for the *stork*, *the fir-tree is her house?* And not only so, but the very *rocks* and *high hills*, which men cannot climb, are a *refuge for wild goats and conies.*"

"Nay," said the farmer, "the *darkness* of the night is partly ordained, as the Psalmist tells us, for the conveniency of *wild BEASTS of the forest*, that *they may move and creep forth* when men are at their rest, and so not likely to be terrified by them."

"When I saw the lion, and the tyger, and the wolf, and the leopard, at fair," said Richard Bruce, "I blessed God that they were not so plentiful here as our flocks and herds; if they were, I know not what we should do."

"Our natural courage, and their dread of mankind, would, I hope, in that case, come to our aid, Richard," said the farmer: "but thanks to God Almighty's providence, which ordained every thing for the best, we are not likely to be put to the trial. Those creatures which are of most use to us are brought within our reach; and those which would disturb and frighten us are placed at a distance. The most terrible beasts are of use in the countries they properly belong to, as I have read in a book of travels; and people hunt them for the sake of their skins: but you find by the Psalmist, they generally go about in the night; so that man may pursue his daily work in safety; for, *when the sun ariseth, the lions* (and other beasts too, I suppose) *who go roaring about all night, and seek their meat from GOD!*—when the sun ariseth, I say, *they get them away together, and lay them down in their dens, while man goeth forth to his work, and to his labour, until the evening.* Well might David say, O LORD! *how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the EARTH is full of thy riches; and so is the great and wide sea also, whereon are things creeping innumerable, both small and*

and great : there go the ships ; and there is that Leviathan, whom thou hast made to take his pastime therein : these wait all upon thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season ; that thou givest them they gather ; thou openest thine hand, and they are filled with good."

"What is a Leviathan?" said Tom Lang.

"I do not know," said Mr. Simpkins ; "but some great creature that lives in the sea, without doubt."

"I do love David's psalms," said Mrs. Simpkins ; "while they are reading one's heart feels his words : what he says seems so true, that I could fancy them my own thoughts."

"Yes, Kitty," said her husband, "they are very delightful ; for whether one is in joy or sorrow, disposed for prayer or praise, there is something suitable to be found in the psalms. And I think, when they are well sung, they are quite charming. I wonder psalmody is so much neglected, for I know nothing that helps more to lift the thoughts to God."

"But why," said Richard Bruce, "did David curse his enemies so? After reading in the New Testament that *we should love our enemies ; bless, and curse not ;* I don't know how to repeat these curses at church."

"I consider them in quite another light," said Mr. Simpkins : "my good master, Mr. Brown, told me, that they were meant as *curses* against those idolatrous nations who presumptuously opposed God when he displayed his miracles in the world ; and that David pronounced them in God's name, not his own : as king of Israel, he was expressly appointed to cut those idolaters off. To Christians these curses are no more than *admonitions* to avoid those crimes which provoked divine justice to root the heathens out ; and, by reading the psalms carefully, you will easily discover what those crimes were. It would be very wicked in us to denounce those curses against our *private enemies* ; and very presumptuous

tuous to utter them against any that we regard as God's *enemies*; because we have no command, we are not inspired to do it, as David was. Therefore, Richard, let us *take warning by the curses*; but *bless and love our enemies like Christians*: and let us try to imitate the goodness of God, by feeding and providing for every living creature that is by him committed to our care."

C H A P. XIII.

IN the manner above related, did good farmer Simpkins endeavour to improve his family, and regulate his own heart: and the first quarter of a year soon passed away. At Christmas 'squire Harvey came to reside at his own estate, the repairs of his house being at that time completed.

'Squire Harvey was a very worthy gentleman; and his lady was extremely humane and charitable. The day after Christmas-day they invited all their tenants; among them they particularly distinguished farmer Simpkins and his wife; the squire admired his humility and good sense; and Mrs. Harvey was charmed with the modesty and neatness of Mrs. Simpkins; and when she was gone, the lady remarked, that her dress was perfectly *in character*. "Really," said Mrs. Harvey, "she made a very respectable appearance, so that you might judge her to be the mistress of a family, and a very reputable person; but there was no attempt at fashion and finery as in the woman who lives at the other little farm; she whom we saw the other day in a one-horse chaise."

"You mean, I suppose, Mrs. Mills," said the 'squire.

"The very same," replied the lady. "It is very strange to me," continued Mrs. Harvey, "that women will ever be so silly as to dress above their station! If they did but know how ridiculous it makes

makes them in the eyes of their superiors, and how much envy it creates in their equals, they would not do it; for I imagine it is chiefly intended to give them consequence in the world; whereas, in effect, it takes away what they might otherwise claim as their due."

"Very true," replied 'squire Harvey; "but when vanity and the love of dress have got possession of a female heart, who can drive them out?"

"I own it is a hard task," replied Mrs. Harvey; "but I wish it were possible to persuade the lower orders of people to be contented with suitable apparel; it would save them a deal of uneasiness. I shall try what can be done with the children when we have Sunday-schools among us; for I look upon it as a thing of real importance to happiness, among all ranks of people, to dress in a manner becoming their station in life. The extravagant love of dress spoils numbers of good servants, and keeps a labouring man in continual distress. A girl," continued the lady, "who indulges it, is liable to a thousand temptations; and if she becomes a wife involves her husband in debts, which embitter his days, and give rise to perpetual bickerings and wranglings between them, which would never have happened, would she have been contented with such clothes as his circumstances could afford."

"I am afraid," said 'squire Harvey, "that if you give poor people advice on the subject, they will only think you do it out of jealousy."

"I hope they will not be so foolish," answered Mrs. Harvey, "as I have nothing but their interest and happiness in view: I only wish to lessen their wants, which they increase to no purpose. But I think the best way will be to get Mrs. Simpkins to talk to them; she is a pattern of propriety and neatness. I should much like to see her at her own house; and will ask Mrs. Williams to go with me."

The next day Mrs. Harvey sent to request Mrs. Williams

Williams to go with her in the coach, and she readily complied with the invitation.

Mr. Williams was the clergyman of the parish, whom 'squire Harvey had lately presented to the vicarage: he and his lady were both most excellent people: to sum up their characters in one word, they were *Christians indeed*.

This worthy divine had already resolved to consider his parishioners as his children, as far as related to their eternal salvation, and the relief of those worldly necessities which his charitable offices could extend to. Both he and Mrs. Williams were therefore exceedingly pleased to hear there was such a good farmer and his wife in the village.

When the ladies arrived at Mrs. Simpkins's they found her, like a notable dame as she was, taking care of a poor little calf; which, being now old enough, she was weaning from its mother, with a view to the bringing it up. Mrs. Simpkins was rather surprised at seeing a coach stop, and two ladies alight from it: however, as her conscience told her she was doing her duty, she did not hurry herself about being in her working dress; neither did she make apologies, as if she thought they were coming to make a visit to her as their equal, but very civilly shewed them into the parlour, and said she would light a fire in a minute; but they insisted on sitting down in the kitchen, which was very neat; and they seated themselves. Mrs. Simpkins said she would wait on them in a minute; for she could not be easy without giving Tom Lang a great charge to drive the cow so far from home that she might not hear the lowing of the calf; for she said it would be teasing them both sadly to keep them near together; neither could she bear to hear their moanings. She then ran up stairs, and tied on a white apron, and waited on the ladies, to know if they would accept of any refreshment her house afforded; but they said, that the greatest treat she could give them
would

would be to shew them her house. To this she with great pleasure consented, and the ladies were highly entertained, as I make no doubt my readers will be, with the description which I shall give them in the following chapter.

C H A P. XIV.

THE house consisted of a very commodious kitchen, with a good pantry and wash-house adjoining, and a delightful dairy. There was also a neat, middle-sized parlour, four bedchambers, and two garrets, with very convenient closets.

In the kitchen was an open chimney, which admitted of two forms, one on each side; on these the men and boys sat very comfortably of a winter's evening, and ate their bread and cheese, while they listened to the conversation which passed at an oaken table, round which were usually placed the farmer, his wife and mother.

Two iron dogs, (as they are called,) with bright knobs, served to keep a comfortable wood-fire together. The chimney-piece was ornamented with a brass pestle and mortar, and some candlesticks of the same metal; and over these hung the basting-ladle, &c. all which bore additional witness to the neatness of the housewife: as it was Christmas-time, the chimney-piece was likewise adorned with holly, &c. all these were set off by white corners, and a neat red hearth. On one side of the kitchen was a deal dresser, on which was spread a cloth as white as snow; above it were shelves, furnished with pewter dishes and plates, which vied with silver for brightness; and beneath it stood a copper porridge-pot and a few sauce-pans, which, though they had been bought second-hand, looked as if just new out of the brazier's shop.

In another part were shelves for earthen dishes, and the

the basons which were in common use. The chairs were of deal, with rush bottoms, and one of them had elbows to it; this was intended for the master of the family, that he might be distinguished from his domestics. The floor was paved with large tiles, which were kept as neat as possible; fastened to the ceiling was a bacon-rack; and near the window hung two cages, in which were the birds Mrs. Simpkins had brought from Mrs. Mills's; they soon got well with the kind treatment they met with, and sung delightfully. There was also in the kitchen a wooden screen, which served in winter as a shelter from the cold air that blew in when the door was left open, as it was frequently obliged to be, and which the farmer feared would give his mother the rheumatism. The walls and ceiling were nicely whitewashed; but Mrs. Simpkins had a great dislike to white walls, and had desired her husband to buy her a few coloured prints, which he readily did. As my readers may be curious to know the subjects he fixed upon, I will inform them.

The first of them was a print representing our Saviour's humility, and the pope's pride; over this he hung the Golden Rule, and the summary of the law and the prophets. On one side of it was a very droll print, called the Happy Marriage; and on the other, a dialogue entitled Death and the Lady, with the print to it. There was another print entitled Keep within Compass; and one representing a miser raking gold together, and a spendthrift throwing it about. Mr. Simpkins had also bought, to paste up among them, the *Way to Wealth*, taken from *Poor Richard's Almanack*. Intermixed with these were a variety of painted stars, such as boys put upon kites, which had been given to Mr. Simpkins by his school-fellows, and which he had carefully preserved.

Mrs. Harvey and Mrs. Williams were exceedingly entertained with the prints, and thought them very edifying.

Mrs.

Mrs. Simpkins then shewed the ladies her dairy, and even her pigsties. It is unnecessary to describe the former, any farther than by saying, that every utensil in it was as neat as possible; and that the milk, cream, and butter, had a most inviting appearance: but as it may seem odd that she should exhibit her pigsties, I must inform my readers that they were clean beyond any idea that can be formed from the appearance of pigsties in general, for they were paved, and washed down every day.

As the coldness of the weather made it disagreeable to be long together in the open air, the ladies wished to return into the house; and, having warmed themselves, they proceeded to view the other apartments.

Mrs. Simpkins took them into her parlour, which was a very pleasant one in summer, for it had two large casement windows, that looked into a delightful garden, which abounded with fruit and flowers: just withoutside these windows grew a honeysuckle, a sweetbriar, a rose-tree, and a jessamine. The curtains were small red and white check, which drew upon rods, and hung down in the day-time just below the frames. In the chimney was a very neat pair of dogs, with brass knobs, and fire irons to match: the inside of the fireplace was set with Dutch tiles, on which were described a variety of scripture histories; and in the fireplace was a large jar with boughs of holly, ivy, &c. Under the window stood a large oaken table, which was polished like a looking-glass, that hung over it; and on the other side was a cane couch, with cushions of patchwork, made out of bits Mrs. Simpkins had sewed together, and joined whilst she was a servant; there were also six chairs of the same kind.

In one corner was a cupboard; in this were ranged, in exact order, twelve beautiful delft plates, some dishes, a few basons, and likewise a set of blue and white china tea things, which had been given to

Mrs.

Mrs. Simpkins on her marriage: also two glass mugs, and a few drinking glasses. In the opposite corner was a Dutch cuckoo-clock: the top of the cupboard was ornamented with plaster images, painted; these were bought of a man that travelled the country; and on the mantle-shelf were jars, and a pair of parrots of the same sort. Over the chimney-piece, in a black frame, hung a print of the King and Queen, and all the Royal Family, in some parts adorned with gold and coloured frost, to imitate precious stones. I will not take upon myself to say that the faces in this print were exact likenesses; but it served at once to testify and keep alive the loyalty which glowed in the breast of our worthy farmer; who declared, that it did his heart good to look at their majesties, and all their royal offspring.

At the side of the room, opposite to the window, hung the EVERLASTING COVENANT, and the TOKEN OF THE COVENANT; between which, in a neat frame and glass, was a sampler, which Mrs. Simpkins had wrought at the charity-school; the bolten and silks having been given her by her god-mother: it was a very pretty one, and worked with such exactness, that it was difficult to tell the wrong side from the right.

All round it was a border of true darning in squares; at the top a large alphabet in common-braid, and another of ilet-holes; then a row of figures: next to them followed these texts of scripture in one thread braid.

"Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord she shall be praised."

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."

"Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God."

Then followed in ilet-holes:

"Katherine Sparks wrought this sampler in the year of our Lord 1748, aged 10 years."

By

By way of conclusion was added this verse from Dr. Watts's songs :

*" Thanks to my friends for their care in my breeding,
Who taught me betimes to love working and reading."*

As this sampler was not so long as the Covenant, Mrs. Simpkins wrought a smaller one, at her leisure hours, to hang under it; containing the following verse, with a border something like wheat ears :

*" God speed the Plough
And Dairy too."*

On each side of the Covenant was hung a school-piece, written by Mr. Simpkins when at school, and curiously flourished by his master : one contained our Saviour's Golden Rule ; and the other our duty to God and our neighbour, in verse, from Dr. Watts's songs.

There were, besides, four little prints, representing a hay-field, a harvest-field, sheep-shearing, and a farm-yard.

The best chamber was much in the same style with the parlour. The bed was green harrateen, the window curtains white linen. On the bed was a very pretty patchwork quilt ; which, as well as other things in the house, had been Mrs. Simpkins's mother's, who died a little after Mr. Brown. Here was no toilet, as at Mrs. Mills's, but a little table, covered with a napkin ; on which stood a small swing-glass, and a pincushion-box, ornamented with split-rushes, and pieces of coloured silks. There was also a neat wainscot chest of drawers and two chairs, which, with two stools, completed the furniture of the room, excepting the prints, which chiefly consisted of subjects taken from the history of our Saviour. The other apartments were furnished plain and neat; but contained nothing deserving of a particular description.

Mrs. Harvey and Mrs. Williams justly extolled the neatness of the house, and said that, if it would not hinder business, they would sit half an hour ; as old Mrs. Simpkins had, while they were viewing the
different

different places, removed the holly and lighted a fire in the parlour. Mrs. Simpkins assured the ladies her mother could do all that was wanted, and that she should be very proud of the honour. She then brought out a nice little white-bread cake and a pat of butter, and expressed her concern that she had no wine, but hoped she should be able to make some the next year. The ladies said, that if she had had wine they should not have drank any, but begged she would indulge them with a little milk; this she immediately fetched in one of her glass mugs: after which the ladies desired her to be seated, and Mrs. Harvey told her she had a favour to beg, which was, that she would dispose of five guineas for her among the poor women of the village: and told her that she should herself look in upon them, and see if they made a proper use of it; and Mrs. Williams said, that she intended to visit them also, as soon as she was settled in her house: in the mean time, if Mrs. Simpkins should meet with any particular instance of distress, she begged to be made acquainted with it.

Having finished the business they came about, the ladies took leave, and returned home, charmed with the delightful view they had had of rural simplicity; and Mrs. Simpkins pursued her work, pleased to find such good ladies thought her worthy of their notice.

C H A P. XV.

WHEN Mr. Simpkins came home, his wife told him of the benefaction that had been left with her; and they both agreed that it would be best to distribute it that very afternoon, as the weather was cold, and therefore most likely the poor people were in great distress. Mrs. Simpkins and her mother got dinner immediately, and set out directly, after leaving the farmer to keep house, who said he should take the opportunity of writing a letter to his old friend Dick Howe;

Howe; which he did, and gave him an account of his happy situation, and his marriage with Kitty.

In the course of their ramble the mother and daughter saw a variety of scenes of distress, and rejoiced many hearts by the seasonable relief which the squire's lady had enabled them to bestow; the thoughts of which afforded them so much satisfaction, that, though they returned a good deal fatigued, they did not at all grudge the trouble, but were thankful to God for making them instrumental to the comfort of their indigent neighbours, whose misery had so moved the heart of Mrs. Simpkins, that she could not help expressing to her husband a wish that she could make an addition to Mrs. Harvey's donation.

The good farmer told her this was a charitable wish, and God-would accept the will for the deed; and he hoped she would not make herself uneasy at not having money to bestow, since Providence had ordered it otherwise, and it was her duty to submit, and be contented with all the circumstances of her condition: besides, he said, she might have opportunities of doing as much good among her poorer neighbours as if she had money to give them: "for God," said he, "knows every one's wants, and sees into every one's heart; and, as our good master, Mr. Brown, used to say '*The wretched and the charitable generally find one another out at proper times*:' so that you have nothing to do, my dear Kitty," continued the farmer, "but to keep yourself disposed for charitable actions; and there is no doubt God will give you occasions of practising them."

Mrs. Simpkins said all this was very true; yet she should not be rightly easy till she could contribute her own mite to the relief of misery; and before she closed her eyes, she prayed in secret to God, who seeth in secret, beseeching him to grant her the means of helping her poor neighbours. It immediately occurred to her, that she might easily afford to make a little caudle for a lying-in woman; that she could spare

some skimmed milk for some starving children; that if she saved the pot-liquor when she boiled a leg of pork, or a leg of mutton, it would, with a few peas, make some tolerable soup. This plan made her quite easy, and she went into a comfortable sleep; and the very next morning began putting it in execution, and from that time became a benefactress to the neighbourhood in many respects.

Old Mrs. Simpkins was occupied with the same thoughts; but not being a housekeeper, and having no money but what her good son gave her, she did not know what to do: at last she resolved to bestow some good advice, which, she observed, many of her neighbours stood in need of; and which her experience in a state of poverty qualified her to give; and also to do some odd jobs of sewing or knitting for them when she had time.

In two days these worthy women went out again to see the effects of Mrs. Harvey's bounty, that they might give an account of their stewardship.

Old Mrs. Simpkins had observed in the village she lived in before, that there was a great deal of selfishness and want of charity among the poor women in general. If a gift of coals, bread, or clothes, was to be distributed, they were ready to tear each other to pieces to obtain the preference. If private benefactions were bestowed upon particular persons, those persons immediately became objects of envy; then you would hear such railing against them as was quite shocking; and every fault that could be remembered for years back was brought out against them, and reports spread to their disadvantage, in hopes that their benefactors would be deterred from bestowing any more favours upon them. She observed, with concern, that the same spirit prevailed in this village also; she therefore took a deal of pains to persuade her poor neighbours to be more generous. She told them that she was very sure, if they would be industrious, cleanly, and good-humoured,

moured, so as to make home comfortable to their husbands—if they would bring up their children in the fear of God, and help one another to the utmost of their power, they would not want half so much assistance from the parish, or the rich, as they generally did.

To this the women usually replied, that they were as good as their betters, and that God did not expect charity from poor folks. The good old woman allowed that poor people could not bestow like the rich; but she insisted that they often could, and should, *give alms*, and appealed to their own consciences, whether it was not frequently in their power to spare a halfpenny or a farthing. This they could not deny: Well then, she would say, if all the poor in the village would spare a halfpenny when they could afford it, a loaf, or some other thing, might be purchased for a poor wretch, who, at that time, had not a farthing to keep him from starving. A day might come, she said, when each of these persons might stand in need of the same assistance, when by the same means he might receive a loaf paid for beforehand, for the small price of a halfpenny.

Old Mrs. Simpkins also observed, that poor women might help one another in many other ways—by sitting up of nights with the sick, sweeping their rooms, letting their great girls look after a child for a sick neighbour, or sending a boy of errands for them, or any other thing which these distressed people could not do for themselves: in return for which they might justly claim help from them in time of need. She added that her husband often said the poor were God's family in a very particular manner; but that, if they expected he should treat them as his children, they must endeavour to live as such, and to be affectionate to their brethren, and not to wish to bite and devour one another, and nourish spite and envy in their hearts against them. She said also, that she had lived many years in the world, and could

say with king David, "*I have been young, and now am old, yet did I never see the righteous forsaken, and their seed begging bread:*" that is to say, *obliged to take up the trade of a beggar to gain a livelihood:* though, to be sure, the best people might sometimes be reduced to great straits, in order to try their patience and trust in God; but it always happened that relief and comfort came to them, and sometimes in a very unexpected manner; of which she could name many instances. The worthy woman therefore entreated the poor people to be kindly affectionate one to another; not merely with selfish views, but for Christ's sake, who would regard the meanest offices done to their fellow-christians, in obedience to his commands, and in imitation of his example, as done to himself. These persuasions were seconded by Mrs. Simpkins; and many women attended to the good advice which was given them, and found the happy effects of it, for they were beloved by their neighbours, and their own consciences told them they were approved by God: but others kept on grumbling and murmuring at every thing that went beside them, by which means they were despised by their equals, and neglected by their superiors; and the evils of poverty fell with greater weight upon them, nor they had neither the blessing of God to remove them, as the benevolence of mankind to lighten them.

Mr. Simpkins took equal pains with the men in the village, and excited them to many good actions: he also employed as a great number of them as he could without extravagance, and gave the preference to those who were kindest to their neighbours.

C H A P. XVI.

MY readers will doubtless be curious to know in what manner the good farmer and his family passed the Christmas holidays; I shall therefore remind them
that

that Mr. Simpkins had been fully instructed by the worthy clergyman, whose name has so frequently appeared in this history, in every part of Christian doctrine and practice that was level to his capacity; among other things, he taught him to consider Christmas not as a season of licentious riot, but as a time set apart for the enjoyment of innocent festivity, and the cultivation of Christian hospitality; in which the husbandman might relax from his usual labours, and give up his mind to decent merriment. Agreeably to this idea of Christmas, Mr. Simpkins allowed his men and boys to go in turns to see their friends; and he, his wife, and his mother, made little excursions to the village they formerly lived in, and also visited, and received visits from, their new neighbours; and all were regaled with mince-pies and other good cheer, and amused themselves with many a merry song and diverting story: but Mr. Simpkins and his family declined card-playing, as they were not skilled in any game, and thought cards rather disturbed hospitality than promoted it. On this account Mr. and Mrs. Mills were not among the number of their visitors, neither did they receive any invitation from them.

Christmas-day itself was passed in a different manner from the rest of the holidays; for Mr. Simpkins had been taught to regard it as a great solemnity, and would not willingly have missed observing it religiously on any account. Before they went to church he read to his family the history of our Lord's birth, as recorded by St. Matthew and St. Luke, and desired them to take particular notice of that part which related to the angels appearing to the shepherds, and then tell him, whether, if they had been those shepherds, they should, instead of *seeking for the SAVIOUR*, as the angels directed them, have sent for a fiddler to play to them—have sat down to cards—or gone to an alehouse to get drunk?

They all answered, that it would have been very
D 3 improper

improper to do so: "Well then," said the farmer, "it cannot be right for us to practise those things on the day that is appointed by our church for the commemoration of our Saviour's birth; for you may observe that the angel said, *Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to ALL PEOPLE*; therefore all people are concerned to seek their Saviour as the shepherds did. He is not now to be found in Bethlehem, but we may find him in Heaven: the Scriptures will direct our hearts to him, and there we may read *the great things which came to pass*. I beg," added he, "that you will attend with great devotion to both the prayers and sermon at church."

Richard Bruce said he thought it very right to spend Christmas-day in that manner, but he wished to know which was the very day of Christ's nativity. Mr. Simpkins replied that, provided they kept one day, it was not at all material whether they observed the exact day or not, for all days are the same in the sight of our great Redeemer; "and, indeed," said he, "Christ has not absolutely enjoined us to keep any day, but left our own reason to direct us in this particular: yet there is no doubt but he will be pleased with our commemoration of his birth, as it naturally leads us to thankfulness for the benefits we derive from it."

On this day the good farmer, his wife, and mother, and Richard Bruce, received the sacrament of the Lord's Supper; and, in the evening, he read in Nelson on the Feasts and Fasts; after which he and his wife sung an hymn suitable to the day; he then took leave of Roger Hicks and Tom Lang, who were to have the first holidays, and begged they would not disgrace that holy season by any improper words and actions, but to be *merry and wise*.

It has already been related that Mr. and Mrs. Simpkins received an invitation to dine at 'squire Harvey's the day after Christmas-day, and that Mrs. Harvey and Mrs. Williams paid a visit at the farm,
and

and left a donation for the poor. A few days after this was distributed they called again, and were so well pleased with the account they received, as to desire Mrs. Simpkins would go with them in the coach, to point out the most deserving objects, to whom they would distribute the same sum with their own hands; Mrs. Simpkins, though not in her best clothes, was very neatly dressed, and expressed her readiness to go, but said she could very well walk; this the ladies would not allow; so she stepped into the coach, and the whole party were received with great joy by their poor neighbours. The ladies returned home perfectly satisfied with their excursion, and left Mrs. Simpkins at her own house: she was happy in the reflection that the miseries of her poor neighbours met with such seasonable relief; and her mother was a partaker of her joy.

Those good women did not confine their benevolence to their own species; all the time the severe cold lasted they did every thing that could comfort and defend their poultry, nursed up their little calves with great tenderness; and saw that the boys fed the cows regularly: they also scattered crumbs and grain for the flocks of birds, which hunger drove to seek their charitable assistance; among these were two redbreasts, which particularly engaged Mrs. Simpkins's attention. These pretty creatures came every day, and soon were so tame as to enter the room and feed out of her hand; and when every other kind of bird was silent, would sing so sweetly that it was quite delightful to hear them: but at last it happened that one was missing, and when the other appeared it did not stay to be fed and sing as usual, but flew away as if disappointed at not finding its mate. Mrs. Simpkins was alarmed at this circumstance, and thought some accident had happened; she therefore resolved to go in search of the lost bird as soon as she could spare half an hour; but this she could not do till the afternoon; when, to her grief, she found in

the garden the poor little creature in a bird-trap, where she lay squeezed to death by a brick that had fallen on her. Mrs. Simpkins carried it into the house, and as soon as the family assembled, produced it, and desired to know which of them had occasioned its death. Tom Lang confessed that he had set the trap for birds, but with no design to catch poor Robin; for he knew it was unlucky to kill red-breasts, because *the Robin and the Wren are God Almighty's cock and hen.*

"I never could find out for what reason they were called so," said Mr. Simpkins; "but, for my part, I regard every bird that flies as GOD ALMIGHTY'S *cock or hen.* God made them; and we read in the Testament, that *not a sparrow falls to the ground, but our heavenly Father knows it:* and therefore it is, and ever shall be, a rule with me not to kill any bird unless I find a necessity for doing so, in order to preserve my corn, and other things, for the benefit of man and beast; and as for setting traps to catch them, or torturing them in any other way, I would not do it; nor will I suffer it to be done by any belonging to me: no; while they live let them fly about in the open air, build their nests, rear their young, and be as happy as their Maker designed them to be."

Mrs. Simpkins was very angry, and told Tom he ought to be punished for so cruel an action: but he promised to set no more traps, and was forgiven; though not without many injunctions to keep his promises attended with many lamentations for the loss of poor Robin. "No wonder her mate would not eat his breakfast," said old Mrs. Simpkins; "poor thing! he has gone sorrowing about all day; I dare say we shall have no more of his singing for one while." Tom Lang kept his word, and never set any more traps; but he often made his mistress angry by his unlucky tricks; amongst which was that of blacking the ceilings and walls of the outhouses with the smoke of a candle; a silly custom that many boys
are

were addicted to. She said she wondered they could take delight in making places look so filthy; and the farmer declared, that whoever did it at his house should white-wash the place himself after his day's work was done.

Another circumstance happened, during the shooting season, which vexed Mrs. Simpkins a good deal. She was walking with her husband through a field, where they found a whole covey of young partridges starved to death in their nest; they heard afterwards Roger Hicks had set a snare and caught the old one. Mr. Simpkins was greatly displeased, and told Roger he despised a poacher at his heart. Roger said he saw no harm in poaching, for he thought poor men had as much right to game as rich ones.

"In former days, Roger," said the farmer, "this might be the case; but if a man lives under a government, he is bound to obey its laws; and you know there are laws in respect to killing of game, and therefore we should keep those among the rest.

"Properly speaking," continued he, "I do think it is the farmer's business to kill the game, for he is likely to be the sufferer by the birds; but if gentlemen will take the trouble of destroying them for us, with all my heart; I am not so fond of killing as to grudge them the pleasure, and they are welcome to eat the game after they have done; for, in my opinion, a good leg of boiled pork and a barn-door fowl, is worth all the partridges and pheasants in the kingdom; don't you think so, Roger?"

Roger replied, that, to own the truth, it was not for the sake of eating the birds; but he did not like to be put upon.

"When you act from spitefulness and pride," said the farmer: "never give way to these; for they will answer no purpose in life, Roger, but to vex yourself. Depend upon it gentlemen will not care for your anger; and if they catch you poaching, they will make you suffer for it. Instead of murmuring

because one law in the constitution is not to your mind, think how many excellent ones there are to defend the person and properties of the lowest people in the kingdom. Remember that a gentleman cannot *kill* you without forfeiting his own life: but I have been told, that in some countries many a poor man is killed, and no account taken of him, because they have not such good laws as we have; and I have heard that all the poorer people are slaves, while we are free-born Englishmen. So let the gentlemen shoot away. Poor souls! many of them would sit and lounge about till they died, if the pleasure of the field did not invite them abroad. Consider, Roger, that we countrymen enjoy the fields all the year round; and are, in general, healthy and cheerful; while many of those above us are dying with gout and vapours. The partridges and pheasants must be destroyed; because they would otherwise distress us, by devouring the fruits of our labour; and we might be obliged to lose many a day's work in hunting them. Let us, therefore, quietly yield the game to the higher ranks of people, and rejoice that something will bring them abroad. I dare say, Roger," continued the farmer, "that you would not wish any man to lie sick a bed for a month or two, merely to give you an opportunity of killing a few birds and hares, which you set no value upon: therefore, if you find yourself hurt when you see gentlemen shooting, or coursing, or hunting, think to yourself they are doing it for their health."

Roger did not much relish this doctrine; but said he was sorry for the poor little birds that had been starved in their nests, and would leave off setting snares.

C H A P. XVII.

AFTER the Christmas holidays were over, all parties returned to their different occupations, which
they

they pursued with great industry; and when the spring came on, Mr. Simpkins had the happiness of seeing his grass grow very thick, and every kind of grain and roots, which he had sown and planted, springing forth in a most promising manner. His live-stock was also increased by the addition of two calves, eight lambs, twenty-two pigs, and a considerable number of poultry.

It is impossible to describe with what gratitude and thankfulness the good farmer, his wife, and mother, received the numerous blessings which were showered down upon them by the bountiful providence of God: their zeal in his service increased; and they delighted, more than ever, in keeping his Sabbaths, in setting a good example, and in teaching their household to know and fear the Giver of all good things.

The case was very different with farmer Mills; he was as negligent out of the house as his wife was in it; and his servants being as careless as himself, the ground was not properly manured; the consequence of which was, that his crop in general made a very poor appearance: while his neighbour Simpkins's promised a hundred fold increase. This raised the envy of Mills; and his wife's was excited by the notice which was taken of Mrs. Simpkins and her mother by all the gentry of the village, while she and her husband were universally despised by all ranks of people; as they not only incurred the ridicule and contempt of the rich by their affectation, but the hatred of the lower ranks by their injustice and oppression; for they *withheld the wages of the labourer*, and *ground the faces of the poor*. Full of these malicious sentiments they became the professed enemies of farmer Simpkins and his wife, who, at first, were vexed at it; but, in a little time, they got the better of this vexation; for they said they could not expect to have the good-will of every

body; neither was the good-will of wicked people worth having.

As farmer Mills did not keep up his fences properly, his cattle not having feed enough in his fields, often strayed into the grounds of Mr. Simpkins, and broke his hedges to regale themselves in his rich pastures. As the good farmer knew how badly the poor beasts were kept, he could not get up his heart to pound them, but desired his men and boys to watch them well, to let them feed a little while, where they did no damage, and then drive them home, and stop the gaps they had made. He said that he looked upon what he thus allowed them to eat, as so much given in charity. Nay he carried his humanity farther; for when he saw a poor beast drawing a load which he could scarcely move with, he would order a horse of his own to give him a lift through a sandy lane or clayey road; and if he saw a poor jackass, or a horse fallen under his load, would relieve them just the same as if they belonged to himself; and if by chance he saw them straying into other people's ground, would send or take them home, lest they should be ill used; and all this he did in compliance with the divine precepts, which he had written down in his little pocket book, as has been related.

Early in the spring Mr. Simpkins found it necessary to increase the number of his labourers, and for this purpose he hired several men and boys: the first morning he got them together he addressed them as follows:

“ I am now going, my lads, to send you into my fields, where I hope you who are husbands and fathers will earn money enough to keep your families comfortably; and that you, who are not yet grown to man's estate, will be able to gain something towards relieving your parents from the expense of maintaining you. I beg you will consider yourselves as fellow-servants, and be good-natured and ready to

to do a good turn for one another ; and I hope you will use my cattle well, otherwise I shall certainly turn you off. I likewise hope that you will not be cruel to any dumb creature that may fall in your way. Some of you boys," continued he, " will be employed in scaring crows, and keeping small boys from the Lent corn ; but I charge you not to spoil a bird's nest."—" May we keep jackdaws, Master ?" said one boy. " By no means," said the farmer ; " unless you would like yourself to have a leg cut off, and be condemned to hop all your life. It is the nature of those birds to fly, and I dare say they like flying as well as you do running ; therefore do as you would be done by.— But come, let us spend no more time in talking ; the sun calls you forth to the field ; but I wished to let you know my mind ; for a *good beginning makes a good ending.*

The farmer then allotted each labourer his day's work, and walked from field to field overlooking them, till the hour of breakfast ; when he returned home to his dear Kitty.

When Joe Martin went down into the cellar to draw a little beer for breakfast, he discovered two frogs ; he instantly seized the poor creatures, and took them in his hat to the barn yard, without saying any thing to Mrs. Simpkins : at the sight of this prize, two of the new boys, who had sat down on a bench to eat the bread and cheese they had brought with them, jumped up and began exulting over the frogs, resolving to punish them for the offence they had been guilty of in getting into the cellar. Mrs. Simpkins, hearing their noise, supposed they were quarrelling, and went out to see ; when she beheld Joe Martin pelting one frog with stones, and Ben Chester, one of the new boys, holding the other on a pitch-fork, which he had run quite through its body ; Mrs. Simpkins immediately called out to them to desist, and made them kill the latter directly, as it was too far gone to recover : the other she obliged
Joe

Joe to fling into a ditch, where it sunk to the bottom, and happily escaped from its cruel enemy. When this was done, she expressed her displeasure to both boys, and asked them whether they should like to be pelted with stones, or to have a pitch-fork run into them? They owned they should not. "Well then," said she, "how can you have the barbarity to beat a poor frog to a jelly, or pierce it through and through? Don't you know that frogs can feel as well as you?"

"I thought, mistress," said Joe, "that we might do any thing with such nasty poisonous creatures as frogs."

"They are nasty things in a house to be sure," said Mrs. Simpkins; "but I don't know that they are poisonous: I have heard say they are good food; and that they, and toads too, are useful in eating up many things that would make water unwholesome; therefore, though I should not chuse to feed on frogs, as I have heard French people do, I never will order any to be killed, unless they abound so as to become a plague; in which case we must destroy them in our own defence: for my part, I never killed a beetle or a worm without saying to myself, is it likely to do a real injury to mankind?"

Mrs. Simpkins then made a thorough search in her cellar, and found another frog, which she immediately ordered Joe Martin to fling into the ditch to its former companion.

When the farmer came home to dinner, he said he had just been reprimanding a boy for spoiling an ant's nest. He declared that he could not bear to destroy such industrious creatures; but said he had watched many a one when he was a boy himself, and had seen them do such things, that he often thought of king Solomon's words, *Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise*. "It is my belief," continued the farmer, "that there is not a living creature upon the face of the earth but
what

what has pleasure in life; what right, therefore, have we to rob them of this blessing while they do us no harm? God Almighty has given us leave to kill such things as are good for us to eat; and we certainly may destroy those that will hurt us; but he never said, *kill for your diversion only*: on the contrary, we are commanded to be *merciful, even as our Father which is in heaven is merciful*: that is to say, to the *utmost of our power*."

"I dare say, then," said his wife, "you never spun cock-chafers upon pins?" — "Indeed, I did not," replied he: "I used to ask my companions, who did so, whether they would like to have a spit run through their arm, and to be twirled about in that manner? Neither could I find any delight in hunting for snakes, and such kind of creatures, on purpose to kill them: I believe they are very harmless, and we have but few in this country; so we may safely let them alone."

"May we not kill wasps, master?" said Tom Lang.

"Not merely for the sake of killing;" replied the farmer; "and, at any rate, be sure to put them to a *quick* death: I never could bear to see wasps cut in two by scissars, and left to linger in torment?"

"What do you say in respect to moles, snails, and caterpillars?" said his wife.

"I say," replied he, "just the same as I do of other creatures; if they really *harm us, destroy them*; if not, why should we kill or torment them?"

"What do you think, then, of angling with live worms?" said old Mrs. Simpkins.

"I think," answered the farmer, "that it is a horrid barbarous custom. Worms appear to me," continued he, "to have an uncommon deal of life in them: they are very difficult to kill. Crush part of them, the other part will survive and cast it off: and even pull them in two, both parts will live a long while. Only think then, mother, what the
poor

poor creatures must suffer. In the first place, they are put to the same kind of pain which we should endure if pulled to pieces by horses: but, instead of being released from their misery by death after this torment, their life is doubled, as one may say, and each part condemned to the additional agony of being fixed to a hook, which we may compare to our being put on a large iron stake. Whilst writhing about on this hook, in great pain no doubt, first one fish, and then another, bites a bit off its poor mangled divided body; which is at last swallowed up by one unfortunate creature, who in its turn becomes the object of our pity, if pity can find a place in the breast of an angler. But I have seen many people, Kitty, and people who I should have thought knew what humanity was, serve a poor worm as I have described, and tear a fish's entrails with a barbed hook; and then throw it gasping for breath on a sunny bank without the least appearance of concern.

"Is there no quick way of killing worms for anglers?" said Mrs. Simpkins.

"I do not know," replied the farmer, "but those who are skilful can make artificial flies and worms too; so they have no occasion to torment living ones."

Mrs. Simpkins said she was very happy in having found a quick way of killing eels; which was to take them by the head and tail, and give them a sudden pull; this breaks the marrow than runs through the back-bone, and they die in an instant.

"It is certainly our duty," answered the farmer, "to study the quickest way of killing every thing that we are under the necessity of putting to death, that it may be over before they have any dread of pain, and that they may enjoy happiness as long as they live. We should consider that dumb creatures have not, like us, the hope of a glorious immortality to sweeten their sufferings."

"Very

"Very true," said Mrs. Simpkins, "and we should consider also, Thomas, that we must give an account, in another world, how we have used or abused the things in this. What our own hearts, on proper reflection, condemn us for here, I think we may justly expect God will judge us for hereafter—Why else is conscience given us?"

"If we would attend to our consciences within us, Kitty, said the farmer, "we should seldom be at a loss to know how to act in respect to the duty of *mercy*; especially, as we have also a plain *written rule* to go by, *Do unto others as you would they should do unto you.*"

Having eat his dinner, and sufficiently rested himself, Mr. Simpkins again went out to look after his labourers.

C H A P. XVIII.

SHROVETIDE now approached, and Mr. Simpkins gave strict orders to all his men and boys not to sling at cocks; and declared he would turn away him who did, and never employ him in his service again. When he sat down with his family on Sunday evening, he renewed the subject, and said he could not discover from whence that cruel custom took rise; but he supposed by the season, at which it was practised, that it must be on account of the cock's crowing when St. Peter denied Christ; and he was of opinion that the apostle himself, if alive, would be one of the last to countenance such barbarity in his cause: for the crowing of the cock, though it occasioned Peter to *weep bitterly*, was in the end a mean of much good to him, by awakening him to repentance, and calling him back to his duty; "and therefore," added Mr. Simpkins, "I should think that Christmas ought rather to *honour the cock* than *ill-treat him*. For my part," continued he, "I never

never hear the crowing of a cock at Shrovetide, but I think of St. Peter, and it reminds me not to be confident in my own *strength* and *reason*; but to seek for *divine grace* to bring me to a proper sense of my sins, to keep me from presumption, and to strengthen my mind to continue stedfast in the faith and duty of a Christian.

"I have often thought," said Richard Bruce, "that it was very remarkable, in St. Peter in particular, to deny Christ; because of all the disciples he was the most zealous."

"He was so, Richard," replied the farmer; "but if you remember he had boasted of his own strength, and therefore God withdrew his aid, in order to convince him of the weakness of *human nature* when unassisted by *divine grace*. Besides, St. Peter ran himself into temptation, which was very wrong, when Christ had told him that he had not strength to resist it. He should in such a case have retired and prayed to God to deliver him from evil, instead of putting himself in the way to be questioned at the palace of the high priest."

"To be sure," said Richard Bruce, "our Lord's disciples had no business there, unless they had had the courage to offer themselves as witnesses of his innocence."

"No doubt," replied the farmer, "St. Peter was very much to blame, and we should all take warning by his example; though we have not our Lord to speak directly to us on particular occasions, we have a number of warnings in the Scripture to keep us from presumption at all times; and we pray every day not to be led into temptation; therefore, when it is in our power, we should avoid all places where we are likely to be tempted to commit sin."

"Well," said Mrs. Simpkins, "Peter was certainly greatly to blame; but how commendable his behaviour was afterwards! He did not fly in a passion with the cock, and threaten to wring his neck off
for

for putting him in mind of his Lord's words; neither did he persist in denying Christ; but immediately, on his Lord's looking at him, humbled himself, and ever afterwards was ready to lay down his life in his cause, and at last actually did so. It is plain, I think, that he had a very tender conscience."

"It is so, my dear," replied the farmer; "and we may learn from this part of his conduct the advantage of leading a life of piety, and of listening to the whispers of conscience. A *hardened sinner* would have acted very differently. Only think how many admonitions and reproofs our Saviour threw away upon the Jews. I remember," added Mr. Simpkins, "that in a book I read in often and often at Mr. Brown's, the Ass was called the *beast of Humility*; and the Cock, *the bird of repentance*. It would be well if we would suffer them to be our monitors, instead of treating them as too many do."

"I am sure," said Tom Lang, "a cock taught me one good thing, and that was early rising. When I went to school I had a little book full of pictures of birds and beasts; among the rest was a cock with this verse:

The cock doth crow to let you know,
If you be wise, 'tis time to rise.

And as sure as ever I hear the creatures crow of a morning, it comes to mind, and up I jump."

"Then I hope you will never fling at cocks, Tom," said his master. "No," answered Tom; "nor will I fling at leather ones any more, which I must needs say I have done many a time, because I did not like to fling at live ones. I never could bear to see a poor bird taken from his dunghill, where he was scratching and strutting about as bold and as happy as could be, and his legs tied together, so that he could not get away, and then cudgels flung at his head, till he died by inches. Nay, I have seen boys break both legs of a cock, and fasten sticks to prop him

him up, and then throw at him again till he died. Poor creatures ! how much they must suffer !”

“ Don’t talk of it,” cried Mrs. Simpkins, “ for it makes my heart ache. I shall keep my fowls in the poultry yard all Shrovetide, for fear they should be served so ; and I think you are quite right, Tom, not to fling at any thing in the shape of a cock, for that looks like *would-be-cruelty*.”

“ May we have pancakes on Shrove Tuesday, mistress ?” said Joe Martin. “ I have no objection, Joe,” answered Mrs. Simpkins, “ to your having pancakes at any time, when I have eggs to spare ; which happens to be the case now, and therefore I will indulge you ; but as for having them on Shrove Tuesday, in particular, that is all nonsense.”

“ Yes,” replied the farmer, “ it is nonsense to eat any particular food on certain days, whether it is done out of superstition or mere custom. It can make no difference in the sight of God, what kind of food a *Christian* eats ; because we have no command to abstain from any sort.”

“ All round London,” said Roger Hicks, “ they eat cross buns on Good Friday. What can that be for, master ?”

“ I have heard of them,” answered Mrs. Simpkins. “ Rachel Smithers told me they have a cross marked in the middle ; to put folks in mind of our Saviour’s cross, I suppose ; but she said people seemed to eat them without thinking any thing about religion ; for they open their shops and go about their business just as usual.”

“ That is very shocking, and very indecent too,” said Mr. Simpkins. What ! when our church calls upon us to commemorate the sufferings which our blessed Redeemer submitted to for our sakes, shall we go about our worldly affairs, regardless of his dying love ? I think if we only read the history of the crucifixion on that day, it would be enough to make us act otherwise.

“ Surely,

“ Surely, if any day in the year deserves to be kept with more solemnity than another, it is that of our Saviour’s death. Not that we should mourn for it on *his account*: on the contrary, he told the women who followed him to his crucifixion, that *they should not weep for him, but for themselves*. We should therefore make Good Friday a day of humiliation, for those sins which made his death necessary for our redemption. And Easter-day should be observed as a day of joy and thanksgiving for *his* resurrection, which is an earnest of *our own*. But people are apt to consider holidays as seasons devoted to idle mirth, designed to be spent entirely in frolicking. To be sure it is very agreeable to rest now and then from labour; and we have no occasion to pray all day long in holiday time; but I think Good Friday, Easter-day, Christmas-day, and Whitsunday, demand particular attention.”

While Mr. Simpkins gave these useful lessons to his family, farmer Mills abandoned his servants to their own will, and his cocks to their cruelty; and many a noble fowl lay weltering in his blood, destroyed by their wanton barbarity: not only so, but he went himself to a cock-fight (a sport he was remarkably fond of): at this inhuman meeting no less than four cocks fought till they dropped down dead; and many others lost their eyes, or were so maimed that they were never well any more.

When Richard Bruce heard of this, he said that, though he did not approve of cock-fighting, he did not think it so bad as throwing at cocks; because it was the nature of cocks to fight, and they seem to do it of their own accord.

“ They are too apt to fight, indeed,” replied the farmer, “ and want no weapons besides what nature has furnished them with; and therefore I think it is very cruel to cut their spurs away and arm them with steel. A good-natured person would rather be sorry to see them pecking and spurring one another, and
would

would endeavour to part them. If it is wrong to work up men of passionate tempers into a rage, and put weapons in their hands, it must be wrong to serve birds so. When we see to what extreme of violence anger will lead even such feeble things as fowls, we should take warning to govern our own inclinations to wrath; and rejoice that we have not only *reason* to govern our turbulent passions, but may have *divine grace* to restrain them, if we will pray for it."

"I do not think," said Mrs. Simpkins, "that there is a creature in the world but what we may learn something or other from."

"Indeed there is not, Kitty," answered the farmer, "if we will make use of our reason and understanding; but, instead of that, men are apt to *copy* animals in what they should strive to *correct* in them; and to sink themselves even below the creatures whom they are appointed to govern."

On Shrove Tuesday Mrs. Simpkins, agreeably to her promise, treated the men and boys with pancakes; when she and her mother had such a job of frying, that they had cause to rejoice that Shrovetide came but once a year.

C H A P. XIX.

THERE was a most glorious hay harvest, and Mr. Simpkins's crop was uncommonly plentiful; so that he had a good deal to send to market, besides reserving a sufficient stock for his own cattle in the ensuing winter; and as he was early in carrying it in, he sold it for a good price, and was enabled to buy another horse and two cows: his two former cows were in full milk, so that Mrs. Simpkins every week carried butter to market: she had likewise plenty of poultry, eggs and sucking pigs, to sell; and her sausages were quite famous, not merely for their flavour, but on account of her neatness.

There

There was, belonging to the farm, a large piece of garden ground planted for an orchard, but by Mr. Simpkins's excellent management, it produced a variety of vegetables in high perfection, before they were plentiful in general; part of these he sold to great advantage; so that with one thing or another he got forward apace, and began to lay by money towards his year's rent; which was a great pleasure to him.

Farmer Mills, on the contrary, was unsuccessful in every thing: he neglected getting in his hay while the sun shined, and wet weather came on and spoiled it; his sheep almost all died of the rot; and his substance wasted away by degrees till he was involved in great difficulties. Instead of endeavouring to extricate himself by industry and frugality, he drank harder than ever, and often came home fuddled. This his wife found fault with; and he in return railed against her for dressing so fine: so they led a very uncomfortable life together; and of course their children were badly looked to, and the servants left to do as they pleased. As for the Sabbath-day, it was, in this family, devoted to vice and licentiousness. The house was either filled with riotous guests, or the farmer and his wife went journies to visit people like themselves, whom they had not the least friendship for. The servants, thinking that they were justified in doing the same as their master and mistress, either romped about at home, swearing and talking all manner of profaneness and indecency; or went about frolicking to alehouses with the maids, or other young women, whose sweethearts they pretended to be; but of whom they made game as soon as they left them.

As for the boys, they diverted themselves with abusing the poor jackass, hunting the cats, setting the dogs together, spoiling birds' nests, and such kinds of cruel diversions; or else played at chuck-farthing, tossing-up, &c. and soon learnt to game
and

and drink, and were always fighting and quarrelling.

While the master, mistress, and servants, pursued these bad courses, their cattle suffered a variety of hardships, besides those already related. The cows were neglected to be milked, the calves to be suckled; the horses were often left without fodder, or obliged to run races with unfeeling fellows upon their backs, who, perhaps, knocked them about the head with sticks, or threw them into a violent heat, and turned them in this condition into an open field, or tied them to an empty rack or manger, without so much as a little clean litter to refresh them.

We may be sure that *the blessing of God* did not attend this dissolute family: none of their affairs prospered; and, with all their pretences to gaiety, they knew not what happiness was; for happiness is only to be found with those who serve God and love his creatures.

Among Mr. Mills's horses was one that he kept for his own riding; this was better fed than the rest, but it had endured a number of tortures; for, though he was really a handsome beast, his master could not be contented with him as nature had formed him, but would have him altered to his own fancy; so he had him docked and nicked, and his ears cropped, by which means he cut what is esteemed a handsome figure upon the road, where the farmer was very proud of exhibiting him, at horse-races in particular; and, in order to shew his mettle, he would whip and spur him till he went at a furious rate. Farmer Mills, like many other thoughtless people, would often suffer his horse to drink freely of water just as he was setting out; and this was the case one Sunday morning when he was going to a distant village to join a drinking party. No sooner was he mounted than away he went full gallop, and soon coming to a hill, instead of drawing in his horse, he kept pressing the poor animal to keep up his pace till

till he quite lost his wind; and in going down at the same rate on the other side he fell, and rolling over his cruel rider broke his thigh; but soon jumping up, galloped home. Mills lay for some time in a dreadful condition; till farmer Simpkins, who was walking with his family to church, accidentally saw him. He ordered Roger Hicks to go home with one of the boys immediately and get a cart with some clean straw; and Mrs. Simpkins entreated her mother to return and send a feather-bed also: she then, by her husband's desire, went to break the affair to Mrs. Mills, and Richard Bruce was dispatched for the doctor.

Mrs. Mills was dressing herself, being in expectation of company, when the horse returned without his rider; and she was setting off with the servants to look for her husband, when Mrs. Simpkins met her and told her of the accident in as cautious a manner as possible. Mrs. Mills was in dreadful agitation when she saw her husband, and Mrs. Simpkins endeavoured to compose her. In a short time the cart arrived, into which Mills was lifted, and laid on the feather-bed, where he groaned with agony, and vented a thousand curses on the horse, forgetful of the many unprovoked blows and cuts which he had at different times bestowed upon the poor beast; and that in the present instance no fault could justly be laid to him.

When Mills arrived at his own house he was, with great pain and difficulty, conveyed up stairs, and the surgeon soon arrived, who, with his assistant, set the limb, but pronounced it a very dangerous fracture. As soon as this operation was performed he desired his patient might be kept quiet; and old Mrs. Simpkins offered to sit by him till a nurse was procured, and Mr. Mills's mother, whom Richard Bruce was gone to fetch, should arrive. In the mean time, farmer Simpkins and his wife did all they could to comfort Mrs. Mills, who now began to feel the dreadful

effects of her own sin and folly; and was convinced that those whom she had despised for their plain apparel had minds adorned with humanity and tenderness; which are more ornamental than the most costly garments.

In this manner the day passed away, so that Mr. Simpkins and his family were prevented from going to church both morning and afternoon. But they did not think it necessary to stay at Mills's when he had got his wife's mother and other relations about him; so left the house with many good wishes, and assurances of being ready to do any thing in their power to help or comfort them.

C H A P. XX.



THE first thing Mr. Simpkins did, after he returned home, was to see with his own eyes that the horses, which had been used, were fed and properly taken care of; and when evening came on, he got his family about him, resolving to suit his instructions to the present melancholy occasion. Accordingly, when they were all seated, he observed to them what a sad accident had happened: on which Roger Hicks called out, that it was a judgment upon Mills for using his beast so ill, and upon a Sunday too.

"Don't say so, Roger," replied the farmer, "to be sure a beast has a right to the Sabbath as well as a man; but God Almighty only knows what are judgments and what are not; and we are commanded *not to judge others lest we should be judged ourselves*: we ought rather to receive these things as warnings; and I hope you will all do so, and keep the Sabbath-day holy; and then for that day at least you will be safe from such accidents as these. Let us read the fourth commandment," said he.

"I can

"I can say it by heart, master," cried Joe Martin. "Do so, my boy," replied the farmer; "but mind the sense of it as well as the words."

When Joe had ended it, "This commandment," said the farmer, "is particularly addressed to heads of families; it is therefore the duty of a master to see that it is observed, not only by himself, but by all that are in the house with him; and this is the reason why I make it such a point with me that you should all go to church every Sunday, twice a day; and hear me read in the evening."

"Have not we been guilty of a sin, master," said Tom Lang, "in driving a cart on the Sabbath-day?"

"Not at all, Tom," replied the farmer: "as it was an act of mercy, our Lord Jesus Christ himself has allowed us to do such things; and has told us that God *prefers mercy to sacrifice*; that is to say, to public worship: so that when we see a fellow-creature in distress we may stay from church to help him, without offending God Almighty: nay, we may even stay from church to save the life of a beast, if occasion requires; for our Saviour justifies such actions by his discourses addressed to the Jews, when they found fault with him for healing diseased people on the sabbath; and he has given us a general rule to go by: namely, *to do well on the Sabbath-day*."

"True, master," said Richard Bruce; "and our Saviour says also, *The son of man is lord even of the Sabbath-day*: the meaning of which is, as I heard our parson say in a sermon, that every man is so far lord of the Sabbath-day, that though mercy and sacrifice are both commanded, yet when it so happens that the one cannot be done without leaving the other undone, we should give mercy the preference. And he observed that our Lord said likewise, *The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath*; by which the parson told us we were to understand, that man was not created for the sake of

keeping a sabbath; but the sabbath, after man was created, was ordained for the sake of man and beast also."

"But have we a right, my dear Thomas," said Mrs. Simpkins, "to make our beasts work on the Sabbath-day?"

"If we want their assistance in any merciful act we doubtless may," replied the farmer. "It stands to reason, Kitty, that, if a man may help a beast, a beast ought to help a man: but for my own part I shall, in the present case, take the burden upon myself, as one may say; for I intend, to-morrow afternoon, to let both the horses and the servants have a holiday, in lieu of the rest they have been deprived of to-day; and that shall be my rule on all occasions, when necessity requires my setting them to work on the Sabbath-day."

"You are very good, master," said Roger Hicks; "but, for my part, I do not desire any such thing; and if you think God Almighty will not be angry with me, I shall be willing to work on the sabbath at any time."

"I thank you, Roger," said the farmer; "but I hope that will not often happen; for we must not do on the sabbath what may be done on other days, that would be sinful, because God Almighty has *hallowed* the Sabbath-day. God first *blessed* it, - that the labouring man and beast might enjoy rest, and then *hallowed* or *sanctified* it to holy duties. Therefore, if I, who am a master, work on the Sabbath-day, I sin; because I do not *hallow* it according to the commandment; and if I do no work myself, yet set my servants and cattle to work on that day, I sin likewise; because I take away the blessing. I must neither work nor require work from *man* or *beast*; for though a beast has no notion of *keeping the Sabbath-day holy*, he has a right to *rest* as a *blessing*. And I think," added he, "we may learn from this commandment that we should not at any time overload our cattle, or
work

work them beyond their strength; for the end of it seems to be *to teach mercy*; which is a duty at all times."

"But how are we sure, master," said Roger Hicks, "that we really keep the Sabbath-day that God appointed?"

"Whether we do or not," replied Mr. Simpkins, "does not signify at all, provided we keep the day that is set apart as a Sabbath in the church we belong to, and hallow one day in seven. With God all days are alike; and, as the Scriptures tell us, even sabbaths are an abomination to him, if we are not merciful."

"Pray, master," said Joe Martin, "what is meant by *the stranger that is within thy gate*? We have no strangers here."

"I take it to mean," answered the farmer, "a visiter or lodger that one may happen to have staying at one's house; also a hireling day-man, or journey-man, who does not so properly belong to the family as those who live constantly in the house; and I suppose they are mentioned to warn masters of families not to harbour ungodly people, and to teach them to allow their workmen proper wages, that they may be able to afford to keep the Sabbath-day without working on it. So you see, my lads," continued he, "God Almighty has graciously ordained that all sorts of people should have leisure to obey his command of keeping the Sabbath-day holy."

"All sorts of people do not *find* leisure, master," replied Roger Hicks; "for I remember once that when I lived at a farmer's near London, there was more work done on a Sunday in the market gardens, than on any day in the week; and I have known basket makers at work for them all day besides."

"Thank God," said the farmer, "I never was in the way of such things. But how came it about?"

"Why, master," replied Roger, "the poor folk said, their masters would not employ them on week-days if they did not work on Sundays; and their

masters said that rich people would have fresh fruit on Mondays, and therefore they must send it to market; so there was a necessity for gathering it; and they could not pack it without pottles and baskets, which the basket-makers could not make fast enough without working on Sundays."

"Dear me," cried old Mrs. Simpkins, "one would think London was an heathen land; I hope we shall never have such doings among us. I should be afraid that God Almighty would send some heavy judgments upon us; for I have heard Thomas read many and many a time that Sabbath-breaking was one of the things which provoked the Lord to punish the Jews as he did; and God is no respecter of persons."

"Well," said the farmer, "whoever is the first instigator to the crimes you mention, Roger, has a deal to answer for. It is a terrible thing for poor folk to be driven to such extremities; but if they are really well-inclined, they may, while they are gathering fruit, think of God and religion, and even pray in their own hearts, and lament their lot."

"Aye, master," replied Roger, "they *may* do a something towards keeping the Sabbath-day holy, even while they are at work; but instead of that, all Sunday long there is such profane indecent talk among them, that it is enough to make a sober person's hair stand an end to hear it; and, after the day's work is over, when they certainly have time to read and pray, they generally go away to alehouses and get drunk."

Mr. Simpkins said this agreed with the account Dick Howe gave of the London people, in a letter he received from him the day before: he then produced the letter and read as follows.

"Dear Thomas,

"I AM glad to find you are not too proud to own an old friend now you are got up in the world; and I thank you kindly for your letter. You cannot think how glad I was to hear you were married to

Kitty:

Kitty: God bleſs you both, and ſend you many happy days together. What comfort it muſt be to you to be able to keep your mother; I ſhould be glad to work for one too, but as I have none, I ſhall try, when my time is out, to do ſomething for my couſin's family. I don't live with my couſin now, for he was ſo good as to turn me over to a maſter in London, where he thought I ſhould learn more, and get better wages when my time is out: and I am vaſtly well uſed, and my maſter and miſtreſs go to church every Sunday, and ſome of the men are very ſober: to be ſure there are good and bad of all ſorts in London, and many temptations for young men; but I hope I ſhall withſtand them all.

“ When I had been in London a month, I longed for a breath of freſh air; ſo I aſked my maſter to let me go into the country, and he conſented on my promiſe not to get into bad company. John Chandler, one of our men, walked with me a few miles out of town, and we went into a church that lay in our way: but, dear heart! how ſurprized I was to ſee the road, nothing but coaches, and chaiſes, and horſes, driving and poſting as if it were an horſerace. Stage coaches crammed full withinſide, and loaded without, enough to kill the poor beaſts that drew them; poſt chaiſes bowling along, driven by unfeeling poſt-boys, who whipped the poor horſes without mercy, let them be ever ſo tired; nay, even if the ſkin of their ſhoulders was quite rubbed off in places—I am ſure nobody would ever have thought it was Sunday.

“ After church, as we wanted a bit of dinner, we went to an ordinary, which is a ſort of club where each perſon pays a ſhilling, and eats what is put before him: here we had very good victuals, but I can't ſay ſo much for the company: there were a number of 'prentices, who, on Sundays, dreſs out and make believe to be gentlemen; and, to ſhew their gentility ſwear and talk all manner of bad ſtuff.

" The house we went to was near the banks of the Thames, and the window looked on the river : here I saw another sight I should not have expected. There were a number of boats with flags flying, as if they were going to Lord Mayor's show ; these were rowed by young men, dressed in trowsers and jackets, like sailors ; but Jack Chandler told me they were mostly 'prentices and journeymen, and that they would either go to some place to sit angling all day, or else to a public house to drink ; but they could not stay so long as the coaches, because of the tide, so I saw them go back ; and, if it had not been Sunday, I could have had some fun in seeing them run aground, and such awkward tricks.

" While we were at dinner some phaetons (as they call them) drove into the yard of a large inn over the way, with young men and women in them, and some girls on horseback. I thought these smart folks were nothing less than lords and ladies and dukes ; but I soon found they were rakish sparks and bold huffies—I was quite grieved to see such sights, and begged John Chandler would go to church again, which he did ; and, would you believe it, Tom ! the pews were almost all empty, though there was a very fine parson.

" In the evening the road was worse than before ; the chaises and horses racketing after one another ; the drivers drunk, and many of the girls the same, with faces as red as scarlet, and their hair all about their ears. " Well," said I, " Jack, let us make haste home ; if this is the way Londoners pass the Sunday, the Lord have mercy on their souls—no wonder so many turn highwaymen, and that so many poor wretches are hanged !

" Since that day I have gone several times along with another journeyman of a Sunday, to his mother's house, where, for nine-pence, I get a bit of dinner comfortably ; and as I go to church twice, and keep sober company the rest of the day, I think there is

no

no harm in leaving the smoaky town now and then.

“ I have wrote you a long letter, for I can write faster than I used to do, as my master lets me go to an evening-school, and pays for me; and I keep his books. If I have any holidays at Whitsuntide, I will come and see you. My kind respects to all friends, and I remain,

“ Your loving friend;

“ Richard Howe.”

“ What shocking doings!” cried old Mrs. Simpkins, “ it makes my blood run cold in my heart to think what such poor wicked wretches will do when the last trumpet shall sound, and they are called to give an account of themselves to their heavenly judge.”

“ Ah, poor creatures!” said Richard Bruce, “ they think nothing of another world; but I hope their children who come after them will be taught better at the Sunday-schools.”

“ Well,” said the farmer, “ It is now time to go to bed, therefore let us join in prayer to God that he will give us grace to observe the sabbath properly; and let us also pray that he will restore poor farmer Mills, and preserve us from such dreadful accidents as we have seen this day.” He then kneeled down, and all the family joined with him very devoutly; afterwards they retired to rest.

C H A P. XXI.

As soon as Mr. Simpkins had set his labourers to work the next morning, he went to inquire after farmer Mills, and found he had had a very bad night: after this he kept growing worse and worse, so that in a few days the surgeon found it necessary to cut off the limb, in order to prevent a mortification. This dreadful operation, though performed with great skill, was followed by a fever, occasioned by the bad state his blood was in through intemperate living and im-

patience under misfortune: this fever deprived him of his senses in a great measure, but could not destroy his conscience: instead of talking of heaven as many good people do, when light-headed, at the point of death, his mind was full of horror, and it was shocking to hear the dreadful fears he expressed. Mr. Simpkins entreated Mr. Williams to attend him; which he readily did several times, but could never find him composed enough to join in prayer; but just before he expired he cried out—"O that I had served my Maker! that I had kept his sabbaths!"

Mr. Simpkins, who called in every day, happened to be there at this awful period, and was exceedingly affected with the unhappy end of this wicked man. He strove to comfort his widow, but she was averse from such consolation as he could offer, and gave way to the most violent transports of grief, or rather passion, from the idea that she must change her gay course of life. Mrs. Simpkins and her mother joined their best endeavours, with those of the good farmer, to bring this wretched woman to sentiments suitable to her condition; but she had no idea of resignation to the divine will; she had no confidence in Him who is a husband to the widow; they therefore left her, hoping that the violence of her grief would naturally spend itself: however, Mrs. Simpkins took the two little children home with her, and kept them till their father was buried.

Though, as I said before, Mr. Simpkins was far from being fond of casting reflections upon others, he thought it his duty to set so striking an example before the young people who were under his care; he therefore described to them the latter end of farmer Mills, and entreated them to accustom themselves to keep the Sabbath-day holy, as it was the most likely mean of preserving them from wickedness and vice. He told them that if they did not spend the greatest part of it in religious employment it would be a day of *idleness* instead of *rest*; and idleness would expose them to the temptations of the devil. "I believe," added

added he, "it is a true saying, that the *devil never finds a man idle but he sets him to work*;" and I believe too, that there are more *presumptuous* sins committed on the Sabbath-day than on any day of the year; for it is a very common thing to hear profane people glorying over religious ones, for the *slavery* they suppose the latter to be under, and their own *freedom from restraints*, which is as much as *defying God*, and sinning in *spite of his commands*.

Mrs. Simpkins said that though she was not in Mills's room at the last, she saw enough to make her frequently say to herself, *Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!*

Old Mrs. Simpkins said, that only foolish people mock and jeer and scoff at religion, for she was certain that there was nothing like it to bear up the mind under misfortune; and when she was trying to comfort Mrs. Mills, she could not help thinking what consolation she had received from religion when she lost one of the best husband's that ever was."

"Ay, mistress," said Richard Bruce, "religion is the best cordial for grief, and the best sweetener of pleasure. I will be bound to say that religious people enjoy *prosperity* as much again as wicked people do."

"That is certainly the case, Richard," replied the farmer; "for in prosperity a righteous man rejoices in having the means of doing good to others; and he lifts up his heart with thankfulness to the giver of all good things; and you know the Psalmist said, *a pleasant and a joyful thing it is to be thankful*. But a wicked man in prosperity, thinks only how he may indulge his vices, and runs into all kinds of riots, which must make him unhappy in the midst of his seeming mirth. But what must he feel at the hour of death! He cannot look forward to a world of everlasting happiness; and all beyond the grave is gloom and horror."

"If people really believed in a future state," said

Mrs. Simpkins, "I think they never could lead such careless lives."

"The misfortune is, Kitty," replied the farmer, "that few like to think of a future state till they are just entering upon it; instead of living in constant preparation for it."

"What do you think of a death-bed repentance, master?" said Richard Bruce.

"I think," replied the farmer, "that it is very dangerous to trust to it, Richard. No one, who lives in a course of sin, can possibly tell what their disposition will be at the last, if their senses are continued; and their heads may be so bad from the first, that they may not be able to think; they may drop down dead suddenly; or may be killed by an accident."

"I have heard people plead the example of the penitent thief on the cross, in favour of a death-bed repentance," said Richard.

"This example," answered the farmer, "encourages sinners to seek the mercy of God through Christ at their last moments, if their repentance is sincere; but you find by the other thief who was crucified with our Lord, that, unless there is a disposition in the mind to improve divine grace, it is offered in vain. God does not force sinners to repent, whether they will or no; and I hope none of my household will run such a hazard as to drive off repentance to so dangerous a time, but serve their Maker and keep his sabbaths before that awful hour arrives; that they may not have cause to lament their omissions, when too late, like poor Mills. Let me persuade you, my lads," said he, addressing himself to the boys, "*to remember your Creator in the days of your youth; pray for divine grace, study the holy scriptures, and use your best endeavours to copy the life of your blessed Redeemer. Fear God and keep his commandments; for this will bring you peace at the last.*"

The boys seemed properly affected with this discourse; and indeed they were both much improved.

C H A P.

C H A P XXII.

IN a short time after the funeral, all Mills's effects were seized by the creditors, and Mrs. Mills was obliged to leave the house. A sale was made to pay the debts, and the furniture fetched a good deal of money; but the live stock was so very bad, that none but Mr. Simpkins would bid for the cattle; so that he bought three horses and two cows for a very small sum; the riding horse was forfeited to the lord of the manor, on account of having occasioned the death of a man.

When farmer Simpkins's servants drove off the poor skeletons of cows and horses, the neighbouring farmers laughed at his purchase; however, when he did what his conscience told him was right, he cared not for the ridicule of the world; for he thought the poor beasts had suffered enough, and he wished to give them a little good treatment.

At first he did not set the horses to work, for he said many sabbaths were due to them, and it was surprising to see what difference a week or two made in them: when he got them a little in heart he set them to light work, and never put them in the same team with his strong cattle; by degrees they got stout and able, and were as good as horses that he must have given a high price for: so Mr. Simpkins had ample amends for his charity, besides the pleasure of doing good. The cows also improved as much, and paid him in milk, butter, and cheese.

Farmer Mills had a dog which he had taught to bark at Mr. Simpkins whenever he saw him; and indeed the latter was obliged to walk with a good oaken stick to prevent his biting him. In the hurry and confusion occasioned by Mills's accident, this dog, which was chained up in a stable at a distance from the house, was left two days without victuals. Mr. Simpkins, missing him, inquired what was become

come of his enemy; and, as soon as he heard that he had been forgotten, he begged to be supplied with some bones, which he carried himself and gave to him. The poor creature received this welcome gift with a thankful and a grateful heart; he wagged his tail, he barked, he howled with joy, and licked the feet of his benefactor, who kindly released him from his confinement. It is impossible to express the transport of the poor creature, who appeared as if his nature was entirely altered; and from that hour he was a good and trusty servant to Mr. Simpkins, and never could be driven from his house, but guarded it well, and was his master's walking companion many years, till he died of old age. The two greyhounds were purchased by a sporting gentleman in the neighbourhood. What little poultry there was Mr. Simpkins purchased. The kittens, which Mrs. Simpkins saw used so cruelly, were both dead; the puppy had been given away, and the old cat was hunted to death by the boys, while their master lay a dying.

As for the servants, they of course lost their places; and it was so long before they could get others, that they suffered many distresses; for nobody, who loved regularity, would hire persons who had lived in so disorderly a family.

At Whitsuntide, Richard Howe obtained leave to pass a fortnight with his friends; one week of which he spent very happily with Mr. Simpkins, who was heartily rejoiced to see him such a neat creditable looking young fellow; and he told him there was no doubt he would make his way in the world. Richard told a number of stories about the ways of the London people which made the boys stare again, and the rest of the family lift up their hands with wonder and concern; he also described the fine buildings, and the lamps; and all the sights he had seen, which diverted them very much; so that when the time came for his departure, they were all very sorry to lose

lose so agreeable a companion. The sheep-shearing happened while Richard Howe was there, on which occasion Mr. Simpkins allowed the lads and lasses a dance in the barn, and joined with them. When his friend was going, the farmer shook him heartily by the hand, and they encouraged each other to continue to lead religious sober lives.

Mrs. Simpkins, about this time, received a letter from Mrs. Brown, informing her that she was not very well, and had been advised to try change of air; therefore, if she could accommodate her, she should be glad to board with her for a month or two, and would bring Rachael Smithers with her, whom her daughter, Mrs. Bennet, had given up to her on Kitty's marriage. This would have been joyful news to Mrs. Simpkins, had not the pleasure been damped by her concern for the lady's illness; however, she got the best bed well aired, and in a few days her good mistress arrived. Mrs. Brown was very indifferent, and the journey had fatigued her a good deal; but by the great care and attention that was paid her, and the goodness of the air, her health mended every day, and she was soon able to partake of the happiness of this worthy family. The farmer continued his Sunday evening instruction, which Mrs. Brown insisted should be given in the parlour, as usual; and she often joined her own to them. The harvest-time came on soon after her arrival, when Rachael Smithers was of great use to Mrs. Simpkins and her mother, who began to find the work too heavy, as the stock of every thing increased, and they had currant wine to make, and other good things, which their garden enabled them to have at little expense. Mrs. Brown had great entertainment in walking in the fields to see the reapers cutting down the corn; it was likewise very pleasing to observe the farmer encouraging them by his kindness to pursue their business with alacrity, building up the shocks, and every now and then stopping to view them,

them with a countenance that expressed the gratitude of his heart for the plentiful increase which God had graciously granted him. When they began carrying in the harvest, the gleaners were permitted to come into the field, and found a treasure there; for the good farmer had literally obeyed the divine precepts concerning them, which he had written down in his pocket-book. An incident happened respecting one of these, which I cannot help relating, as it will afford a lesson which may be useful to many.

Among the gleaners was a lad whom Mr. Simpkins observed to throw down a bee, after having sucked its bag of honey: as the poor insect was dead, Mr. Simpkins said nothing to the boy at the time, but let him pursue his work till he had gathered as much corn as he could well carry: another gleaner assisted him to lift it on his head; and he set off with his load, pleasing himself with the thoughts of the pleasure he should have in contributing towards the supply of the family who were at that time in great distress. What then must be his surprise and disappointment in finding his store seized by farmer Simpkins, while the rest of the gleaners were suffered to proceed? Every one wondered at this action in so kind a neighbour, and stopped to hear it explained. On this, the farmer said to the boy—"Do you remember what you did to the poor bee this morning? He was, like you, carrying home his gleanings, when, with great barbarity, you caught him, robbed, and murdered him. For this cruelty I mean to punish you; for I will never see any innocent creature ill used on my grounds without taking its part." The boy begged and entreated that he might have the corn, as his mother, who was a widow, had not any money to buy bread; and promised, that he would never more kill a bee. On this, the good farmer restored his gleanings; but desired him, and every one present, to remember that bees worked as hard, and were as capable of feeling, as themselves; which, he

he said, he would convince them of, if they would come, the first leisure day, to see his wife's bees, which were then at work in some glass hives that Mrs. Brown had made her a present of.

Mrs. Brown, who was by, was extremely delighted at the farmer's method of bringing this matter home to the boy's own feeling, and told the gleaners, that it was pity to destroy such industrious creatures as bees, merely for the sake of sucking their bags of honey, which had cost them so much pains to collect from flower to flower. "If this boy had even robbed the bee without killing him," continued the lady, "the poor creature would have been ruined; for the queen of the hive suffers none of her subjects to return without honey: she allows no idleness in her dominions. I am sure, Mr. Simpkins," added Mrs. Brown, "that none of these good people, who know what labour is, and who have felt the comforts of enjoying the fruits of their industry, will ever destroy bees, when they are shewn how ingenious and laborious they are."

The harvest being now completed, the last load was carried home in great triumph, and an excellent supper, consisting of cold buttock of beef, a leg of mutton and other good things, was provided: to which was added plenty of nut-brown ale, which went cheerfully round, accompanied with many a song. The farmer himself sung *Harvest-home*. When he had finished, Roger Hicks said there was something in that song which he could never understand; *Serious* bids *play*: he could not think what *seriousness* had to do with a harvest feast!

Mrs. Brown, who went into the kitchen to view the merry party, was greatly diverted at Roger's innocent mistake; and the farmer told him, that he had asked a learned gentleman the meaning of the word, who told him that *Ceres* was the name of a heathen goddess, who they fancied took care of corn fields. "Let us have nothing heathenish here,"
cries

cries Roger: "Well then," said the farmer, "for the future I will sing—*For now we may play, and keep holiday, &c.*" All the company allowed it to be a good alteration; and Roger was called upon to sing *Sir John Barleycorn*; which he did with a great deal of humour. When he had finished it, "Now," said the farmer, "I shall be even with you, Roger; for what have *solemn vows* to do in a *jesting song*?" This set all the company to thinking how it could be altered; and Richard Bruce said, "if I was a printer, I would print the third line of the first verse thus; *And they all agreed, but not in wrath.*"—"This will do excellently well," said the farmer: "but how would you alter the second verse, Richard?" This puzzled them for some time; and at last Tom Lang said that he thought it might be, "*And then declared ev'ry one.*" which alteration was also approved; and Roger was desired to sing it again, with these amendments. "Very well, Roger," said the farmer; "and now, that you have made a nobleman of Sir John, let me advise you to take care that he does not knock you down." Roger replied, that he knew his tricks too well to let him do that. After which a variety of other songs were sung; to most of which objections were made: on this Richard Bruce said that he thought it was a great pity some good person would not look over ballads, for there were a great many that wanted but little alterations to make them very pretty: but now-a-days a man was afraid to lay out a half-penny in songs, lest half of his bargain should be wickedness or trash."

Among the labourers was a man named William Smith, who esteemed himself a great scholar, and politician. On the company joining in chorus with Mr. Simpkins in *God save the king*, William Smith observed, that, as for the king, he had nothing to say against him, but he believed his ministers were no better than they should be; for he had read a great deal about them in the newspapers, which he took in every week.

Mr.

Mr. Simpkins replied, that for his part he did not pretend to know much about the king's ministers; nor, indeed, did he think any man could, who lived at such a distance from them; and he made it a rule *not to talk evil of the rulers of the land*, but should pay the taxes with cheerfulness, while he could enjoy the fruits of his industry, and *sit in peace under his own vine and his own fig-tree*: and he desired no politics might be talked at his table."

Richard Bruce said, "that he thought newspapers were stupid things; he saw nothing diverting in them, except about men who rode upon four horses at once, flying about in air-balloons, and such kind of things; and he had some thoughts they were put in to make countrymen stare. But come," said he, "'tis my turn to sing now." On this he immediately struck up *The ploughman's delight*; which restored the cheerfulness that politics had nearly put an end to.

In this manner the evening passed away till the clock struck eleven, the hour fixed upon for their departure; when every one of the men returned home quite sober, though cheerful. When they were gone, Mr. Simpkins observed to Richard Bruce, that good ale was certainly to be reckoned among the blessings of life, provided it was taken in moderation, and that it was very proper for working people; but as for drams, a man might as well pour melted lead down his throat, for they would as surely destroy him, though not so quickly: he therefore begged his servants never would be tempted to drink them. He then desired them to collect their thoughts and join with him in a short prayer, in which he returned thanks to God for the blessings he had showered down on the land, and for the share of them which was allotted to himself. Mrs. Brown declared herself extremely delighted with the scene of rustic festivity, from which all boisterous noisy mirth, and intemperate excess, were banished; and each party retired to bed with contented and cheerful hearts.

C H A P. XXIII.

THE orchard was as fruitful as the fields had been, so that after, selling a good deal of fruit at market, Mrs. Simpkins was enabled to lay by apples enough for her use in the winter, and to make a small cask of cyder. She had also made a little grape wine; but the latter was intended only to treat friends with.

When Michaelmas came, the farmer found that he had not only more than double the stock he begun with, but had money sufficient to pay his year's rent, and the interest of the sum he borrowed of 'squire Harvey. This, on the quarter-day, he carried to his landlord, who was so pleased with his punctuality, that he told him, nothing should be wanting on his part to make him happy.

Mrs. Brown staid till the weather began to be cold, when she returned in good health to her daughter; and Rachael Smithers went with her. At her departure, Mrs. Brown made Mrs. Simpkins a present for her board, with many acknowledgments for the pleasure she had received in her family.

As soon as Rach. Smithers was gone, Mrs. Simpkins found it necessary to hire a maid; for, having eight cows, and a great deal of dairy work, she could not manage it without more assistance than her mother-in-law was able to give: she therefore looked out among the poor neighbours for a strong plain-dressing girl; but there was not one to her mind old enough, so she hired Lydia Tompkins, who seemed to be an industrious modest young woman, but inclined to a fault, which has of late years crept in among the laborious poor, even in villages far distant from London, of affecting to follow the fashions of people in higher ranks in life. Mrs. Simpkins made it a condition of her hiring Lydia, that she should wear such caps, and other clothes, as she herself approved, to which the girl's mother consented, rather

rather than lose a good place for her child. Mrs. Tompkins was a well meaning woman, and had complied with her daughter's desire of wearing gauze caps and handkerchiefs, from an idea that they were cheaper than cloth ones; not considering that they would scarcely bear washing; and, when dirty, had a much more mean and untidy appearance than linen. She had also bought some left-off things, which she thought *bargains*, of a lady's maid. All these gew-gaws Mrs. Simpkins required to be laid aside; in the room of which she bought Lydia (by the bounty of Mrs. Harvey and Mrs. Williams) a camlet gown, and other things of a piece with it; and when the girl came to her place, Mrs. Simpkins encouraged her by telling her that she had been a poor girl herself, and had always been praised by her betters for dressing in that plain way: and old Mrs. Simpkins said, that, for her part, she thought a fine cap made a patched gown look still meaner. That it did not signify having one piece of finery, if a woman could not be fine from head to foot: that poor folks' money was hardly earned, and should not be lightly spent. She also advised Lydia to go every day with her hair, not only combed clean, but put up smoothly, her handkerchief pinned even, and her shoes up at the heels. "Modesty requires that you should dress in this manner, Lydia," said Mrs. Simpkins; "for it will be a likely mean to keep you from romping and hoydening. We may see the bad effects of loose attire in many young women, who grow quite bold by it. If you want to imitate your betters, child," added she, "copy them in *goodness*. No dress will make *ladies* of *poor folks*, but the very meanest may become a *Christian*, which is a much higher character; and one way of pleasing God, is to shew, by wearing suitable apparel, that we are contented with the state of life he has thought fit to place us in."

As Mrs. Simpkins was a very kind mistress, and dressed plain herself, Lydia readily followed her advice,

vice, became a very good servant, and lived with Mrs. Simpkins six years: and at last married to an honest industrious man.

Richard Bruce and Roger Hicks continue so firmly attached to their master, that no advance of wages will tempt them to leave his service. Tom Lang looks up to him as a parent; and Joe Martin is grown very good tempered.

Mr. Simpkins's cattle become old in his service; and, by having proper rest and kind treatment, are fit for work longer than they would otherwise be: when they can do no more, he keeps them without work, till age and infirmities render their lives uncomfortable; in which case he puts them to as quick and easy a death as possible; and never sells them in their old age, lest other masters should abuse or ill-treat them, well knowing that, if they are not fit for *his* work, they are not fit for *any* work.

Mr. Williams testifies great regard for the worthy farmer, who has in his turn gone through all the parish offices with great humanity and integrity; the poor never mention him, his wife, or mother, without blessings; their superiors respect them; their equals love them.

Old Mrs. Simpkins enjoys good health though advanced in age, and has lived to see six grandchildren, namely, four sons and two daughters, who are educated by their pious parents to the imitation of those virtues which have rendered themselves so valuable to the world: and as these amiable children grow up, they assist their father and mother in their respective employments, so as to ease their labours and lighten their cares; and, in love to each other, they are patterns to all brothers and sisters.

In the course of years, Mr. and Mrs. Simpkins have shared with their neighbours the usual disappointments by inclement seasons; but while others, according to the custom with some farmers, murmur and repine, they are always contented and resigned;

signed ; observing, that weather which is bad for one thing is good for another ; and, through the blessing of Providence, their losses have either been less than could have been expected, or made up to them some other way : so that every year prosperity has increased their store, and enabled them to be more liberal to their indigent fellow-creatures ; and Mr. Simpkins is become an opulent farmer, and rents a considerable part of Mr. Harvey's estate : but neither he or his wife ever forget from whom their riches flow, or in what manner Christians should enjoy them. Sickness and sorrow sometimes fall to their lot ; but every affliction is borne with patient submission to the Divine will, and every deliverance acknowledged with grateful thanksgivings.

May the examples and instructions contained in this history have due influence on those for whose use they are designed, and excite them to the practice of *universal benevolence* ! And may every reader, like farmer Simpkins and his wife, *have the constant testimony of a good conscience, and a well grounded hope of everlasting happiness through the merits of our DIVINE REDEEMER.*

F I N I S.



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